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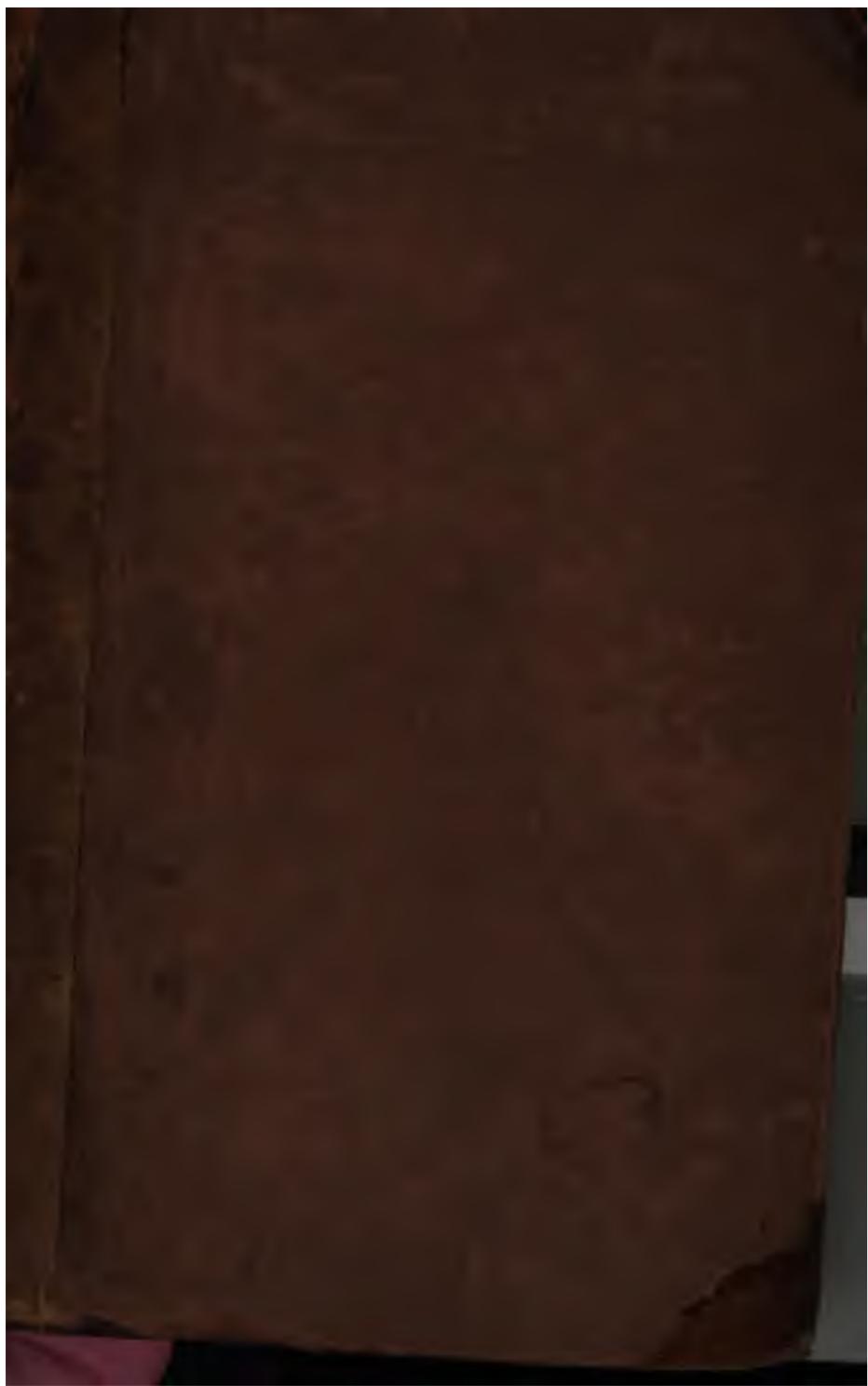
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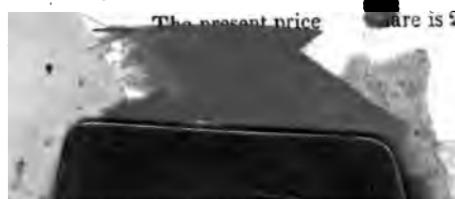
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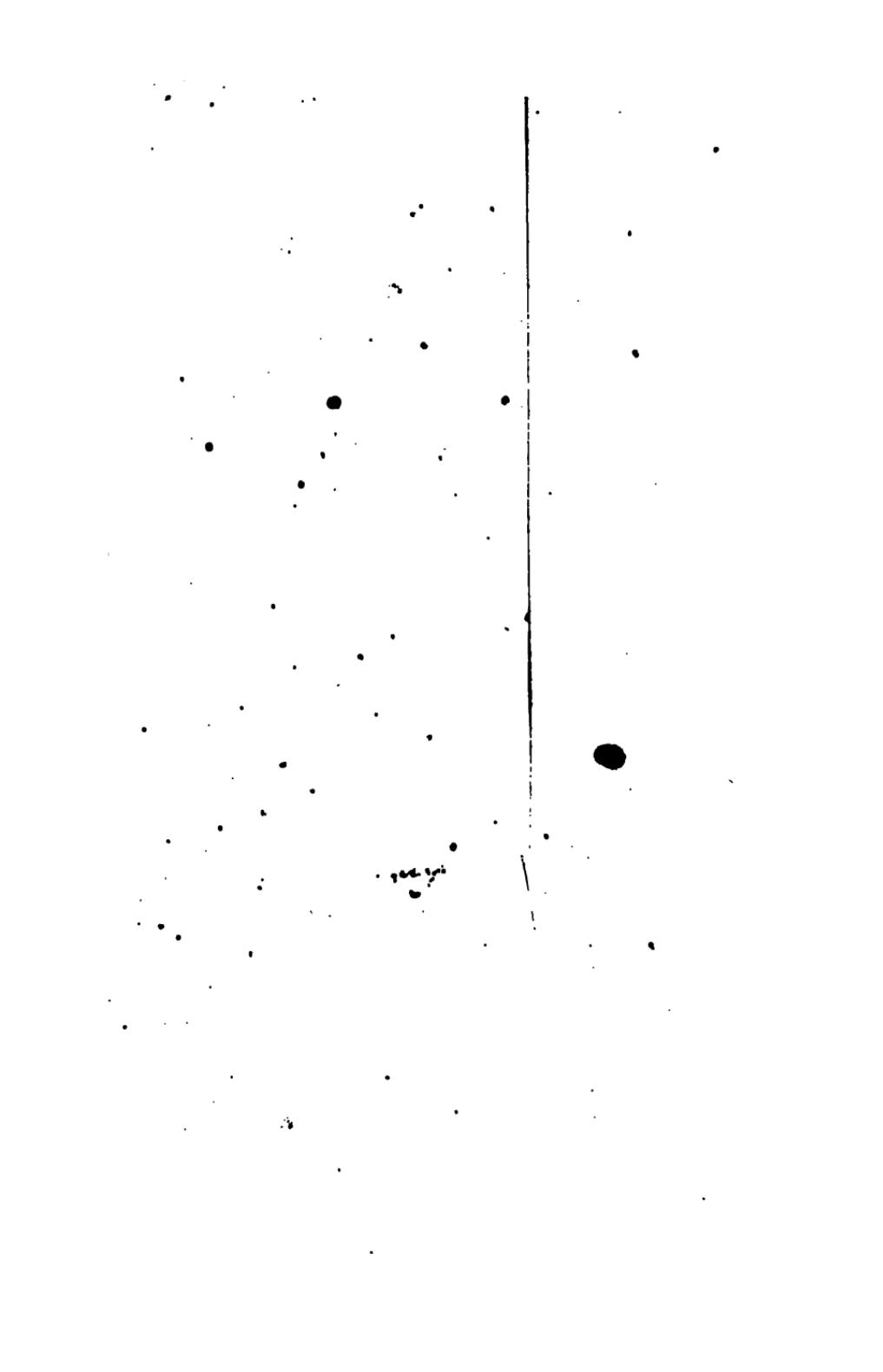
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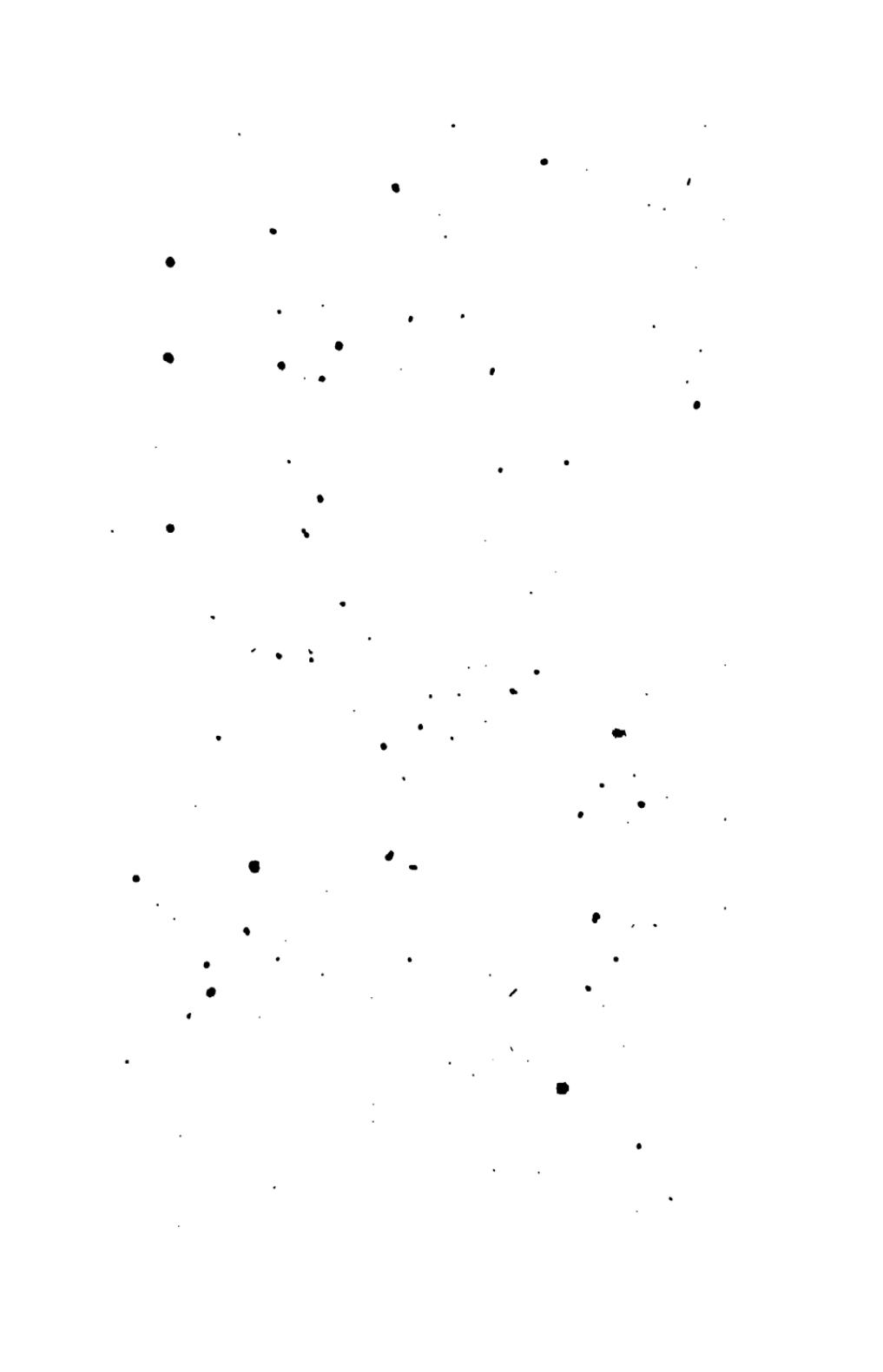
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MY AUNT PONTYPOOL.

97 177

IN TWO VOLUMES.

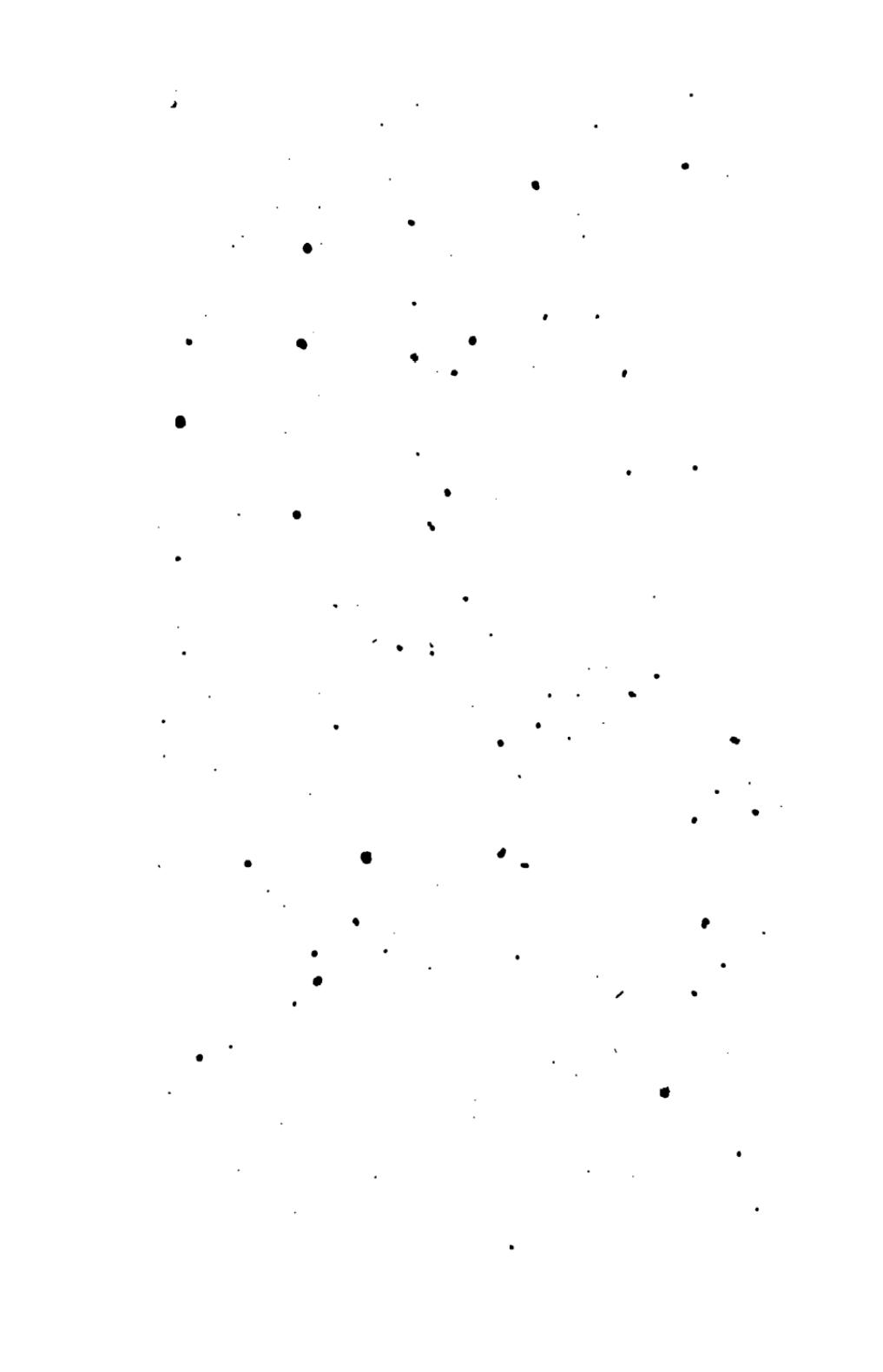
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1836.



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97 177

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BOSTON: L. C. LEE & CO.

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THE Author of this work has very little to say to the Public in regard to it, and therefore refrains from the tempting egotisms of a regular preface. He thinks it right to state, however, in order to guard against all mistakes, that none of the characters, except Mary Denham, Colonel Adair, Charles Lacy, and ~~Henry~~ Adair, are drawn from persons now living. The rest may indeed have had prototypes, but if so, the grave has closed over them many years. The idle vanity of attempting any thing like satire he disclaims, and should scorn himself, if he could pander to the bad feelings of any portion of the public, by attacking individuals.

To his friends he has merely to say, that having from private motives withheld his name from the book he has written, he shall consider himself justified in using any means that suggests themselves to preserve his concealment. Nevertheless, as there are many little anecdotes, and many little traits in the work which may betray him to his more intimate acquaintances, he begs them to keep their suspicions on the subject to their own bosoms, and to do all that they can to favour his desire of remaining unknown.



MY AUNT PONTYPOOL.

CHAPTER I.

It was upon a dull untidy night in the early spring, so many years ago, that the objects of that time appear to the eye of memory like mountains through a mist—so many years ago, indeed, that we have but one landmark, whereby to guide ourselves back to that period, in all the bleak race-course of the past, namely, the battle of Waterloo, for it was a little before that event, that two gentlemen took their way from a house towards the south-western corner of Portman Square, and entering Oxford Street, walked on in the direction of that populous and bellicose quarter of the great Metropolis, called St. Giles's. It had rained all day, and by the way that the sky proceeded, it bade fair to rain all night. But—notwithstanding that a night show in Oxford Street is not in general at all in the right way to water virtue—the two walkers advanced pretty nearly alone over the broad flag stones which were washed smooth and clear by the falling deluge, and along which, the dim and lantern-like glass globes, then all unconscious of gas, shed long lines of smoky and unserviceable light. From the shop windows, however, streamed a prouder glare reflected from, and refracted through the brilliant or diaphanous surfaces of Belcher handkerchiefs, gauze ribbons, druggists' bottles, pastrycooks' plates and cherry brandy, and aided and heightened by the pellucid crystal of the plate glass, then first rising into general use. But in spite of all this splendour, which might have made the Sultan of Serendib jealous, still the envious rain poured on with a cool deliberate drip.

ble, only aggravated into a splash here and there, by a greedy house gutter which, like some of our Sunday newspapers, collects all the washings of other people's tiles, to pour them forth again with additional filth of its own. At the corner of fair South Molton Street, stood the invariable long line of rusty hackney coaches, with the wet horses and their leather-covered bones, and the wet waterman with his oilskin hat and straw-bound ankles, holding firm the dim obscure in the middle of the street; but even the sight of these inconvenient conveniences did not tempt the two personages we have mentioned, to venture out of the loaded air, into the much more doubtful atmosphere within. Far from it! with the constancy of martyrs, and the magnanimity of Roman emperors, they walked on upon the pavement, though every step of their thin boots caused an unseemly sound of splashing and a ripple of bright concentric rings round either foot, as the lamp light shone upon the disturbed water; and as they went on, they talked of many things, aye, and laughed right merrily, as if rain could not wet through thin boots, and wet boots could not produce the many maladies recorded in Buchan's Domestic Medicine. The truth is, however, that they were young and light of heart, and strong and enduring of body, and the character of neither, was that particular character which minds wet weather, and smothers the unoffending chin in supernumerary handkerchiefs every foggy morning. Of their characters, however, we shall say no more, seeing that men's characters are best displayed in their actions, and their's, it is the purpose of this book to record; but of their persons, a few words may be spoken, inasmuch as the learned reader, let his knowledge of zoology be what it will, can never discover what was the size, shape, or appearance of any viviparous biped by a mere detail of his sayings and doings. Even were we to say that one of the two knocked down a man of six feet high—which would not be true—it would give no idea of his height, for we must all have seen thatfeat performed more than once by men, whose extreme length, taken by the best computation of the Board of Longitude, did not exceed five feet and four inches.

The two gentlemen we have spoken of then, were very much of the same height. The one on the right hand side *might be* five feet ten, while his companion perhaps was

three quarters of an inch taller. The taller of the two, however, was more slightly made than the other, and perhaps a year or two younger; he had also dark hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, and whiskers, but blue eyes, and very good ones, and his features were of that fine straight and English form, which people, who know nothing about the matter, are accustomed to call Grecian. In short, he was a very handsome young man, and had a brow something like that which Mr. Walter Savage Landor ~~must~~ have displayed at the same age, thoughtful, decided, not stern, but grave, and yet with breadth and room enough to be the play-ground of wit and fancy.

His companion, I have said, was more broadly made, and any one, who has remarked the Duke of Wellington walking round Charing Cross, towards Downing Street, and suffering with all the cool carelessness of a great mind, the conqueror of a thousand fields, to be elbowed off the pavement by a turnip-headed no-minded bricklayer, will have a very good idea of the peculiar conformation of him whereof we speak, making at the same time some allowance for difference of age. Broad in the shoulders was he, thin in the flank, erect without being stiff, not fat, but muscular in his limbs. His complexion was much darker than that of the other, and his features were fine, but somewhat more expressive of calm judgment, than imagination. There was a good deal of fire however, in his eye, of that particular kind, which betokens quick temper and somewhat strong passions; but his mouth according to Lavater was a good tempered, and yet an intellectual one; so that if Satan were inclined to use his strong passions for bad purposes, it seemed that he would have to overcome two or three well-constructed outworks in the first place. Such were they then as they walked along arm in arm, with one brown silk umbrella over both their heads, dressed completely in the fashion of the day, but yet without being very much in its extreme. Blue frock coats were then the mode amongst men in the army, braided richly over every part that admitted such an ornament, and though there were many good souls in London who very unsuccessfully assumed the garb, and affected the deportment of military men, the blue frock coat which each wore was evidently in the present ~~instance~~, borne with the well-trained air of the parade, by two gen-

lemen, who, conscious of a right to wear anything they pleased, were excessively indifferent as to what actually did cover them.

At the corner of Vere Street, they were just pausing in their advance, when a dashing roll of wheels was heard, and rushing on through the dark night, came two blazing lamps, like bearded comets, borne along before a splendid green chariot, by the impetus of two iron greys.

“Lady Mary bound for the opera!” said the shorter of the two, “Do you not go there to night yourself, Charles?”

“Not I!” answered the other, as they crossed over the street, after the carriage had rolled on, “I have a good deal to do to-night, and if I were to dress afterwards, I should but come in for the ballet, a thing I hate, especially when I have not heard the opera. It requires the music to make fools of us first, before the folly of the ballet is endurable.”

“But will not Lady Mary think you remiss?” demanded his companion, with a smile, which was not altogether a well pleased one either, while he examined the countenance of the other as well as the lamp-light would let him.

“Nonsense,” replied his companion, “I thought you knew better. What is Lady Mary to me, or I to Lady Mary? We have loved each other like brother and sister from our cradle it is true, and shall, I trust, love each other like brother and sister to our grave: but never anything more, I can assure you; and why the world should make up its mind that Mary and I are to marry, when we have not the slightest thought of ever doing such a thing, I cannot understand?”

“Perhaps because the world sees more clearly into your hearts, than you do yourselves,” replied the other gravely.

“No, I can assure you,” answered his companion, “Mary and I talked over the whole subject not a week ago, with the most perfect composure. I offered to leave town if the report annoyed her; but she said that the good-natured world would only say we had quarrelled; and so we fell upon a scheme which will answer better, and silence the great gossip for ever—namely, for one or the other to marry somebody else as fast as possible. So we are both now looking about on every side to see if we can find any one to fall in love with.”

"Then I will go to the opera directly, not to lose my chance," replied the other, laughing.

"No bad plan, upon my honour," answered his companion more seriously, "and something more, my good friend, no one's chance is better!"

"Nonsense, nonsense, Charles!" he answered, "Fortune! fortune! remember!"

"Well! Go you to the opera!" replied the other, "for here I must leave you."

His companion cried, "Indeed!" for at that moment they stood at the end of a dull, narrow, irregular street, which then occupied a part of the ground whereon Regent Street now stands, and was ycleped Swallow Street. His "indeed," therefore, smacked of real astonishment, when he found that his companion's steps were directed thither; and then after a pause, he burst into a gay laugh, adding a young man's joke upon the subject of the expedition, and left him, turning back to his own lodgings, in order to follow good advice, and dress for the opera.

To the jest of his companion Charles Lacy made no reply, but walked slowly till he came to the corner of Hanover Street, where one of the unfortunate wanderers of the night accosted him with that fearful mixture of levity and wretchedness, the mingled effrontery of misery and vice, which is so horrible to behold in a fellow creature, and that fellow creature a woman. A sort of shudder passed over him, as the sight connected itself with some painful thoughts already in possession of his mind, and giving her some money, he passed on. Turning into a street some way farther down, the name of which matters but little, he went on from house to house, examining each as he passed, till towards the narrowest part, and it was all narrow, a small shop window emitted sundry dim rays upon the street, proceeding from two thin tallow candles, as tall, as white, and as meagre as the most ill-tempered old woman in a country town. Through the small panes of glass might be seen an indescribable variety of articles in confused array, of every kind, sort, and description, that can supply the daily wants of humble classes, from bees' wax and bread to bacon and hogs' lard; but on a sheet of paper, which covered one of the panes of the window, was expressed what the proprietor of the shop considercd as the choice and select wares of

her shop. The inscription was somewhat to the following effect :—“ Salt, pepper, vinegar, mustard and beer, Dutch drops and pickled salmon !”

Our friend drew a sigh as he looked at the house, but nevertheless, stopping at the shop door, he entered and asked a middle aged woman, who was serving out a portion of yellow soap to a housemaid in pattens, whether Mr. Adair lodged there.

“ Yes, sir,” replied the woman ; “ be so good as to knock at the private door.”

The stranger quitted the shop, and then perceived what he had not remarked at first, that the shop had a private door, adorned with a small clean brass knocker, and bearing altogether an appearance of neatness superior to that of its twin-brother of the shop. He knocked accordingly ; and as knocks at the street door are a sort of phonetic indication of the state, quality, temper, and business of the person who knocks, it may be as well to state that his was the quick, sharp rap of a gentleman, which lies in medium between the two-penny post and the footman, but at the same time it was somewhat moderated in vigour, so that the last stroke was softer by five degrees than the first. The knock was his own peculiar knock, for every gentleman has his own distinct and definite ; but the modification which it underwent was owing to thoughts passing in his own mind, which was a fine one, or rather perhaps of feelings stirring in his heart, which was a kind one.

The door was opened speedily by a good looking maid servant, of whom he again demanded whether Mr. Adair lived there, and whether he were at home ?

“ I will tell you in a minute, sir,” replied the girl, leaving the inquirer with his umbrella dropping on the oilcloth of the passage while she ran up stairs, from the second landing-place of which was heard her voice the next moment speaking to some person on the first floor.

“ A gentleman below wishing to know if you are at home, sir ?” said the female tongue.

“ Do you not see that I am at home ?” replied a second voice, somewhat sharply. “ Desire him to come up !”

The communication was soon made, and the stranger, slowly mounting the stairs, presented himself at the door which was held open for him by the maid, and entered a

small drawing-room, the furniture of which was old, but neat. Besides that furniture, however, which evidently belonged to the lodging, were one or two extraneous things which may as well be noted down here. There were several books neatly bound, one of Stodart's best pianos, a very handsome writing desk, and a work box of buhl which deserved the name of splendid : but besides all these, there were two other things in the room without which all the rest of the furniture were of no consequence. It contained two human beings, cut out of that wood whereof alone fortune makes ladies and gentlemen, though God knows the capricious goddess sometimes scatters them about in strange places after she has made them. The gentleman was a man who had certainly seen fifty-five years roll by him with their several burdens—for after all time is but a market cart which passes daily by our door, and from which we might buy many a precious commodity as it goes, but that with true human perversity we let it roll by, and then send a servant after it to pick out for us what he chooses. However the gentleman, as I have said, was full fifty-five, to use the common corrupt term.—He might perhaps be a little more—I am not sure he was not sixty, for appearances are so deceitful in regard to age. He was a fine looking man too, standing six feet high, and as erect as a tent pole. His hair was as white as snow, and not much of it; but do not let it be supposed that I mean to insinuate he was bald. No ! the hair was thin, but it was equally spread over the surface of a fine shaped head, and while it was raised a little, like a frill at the top, it floated off in two silvery curls on either side, leaving exposed a broad, noble forehead, and a strong marked but handsome countenance. The other tenant of the room was a lady, seated before the work-box which has had honourable mention, and busied with the things that it contained. She was young and beautiful—very beautiful, not alone in features, though they were as lovely as the lover most in love dreams of when he thinks that he is looking at his mistress ; but she was beautiful also in complexion. It was of that clear transparent brightness which is to the refined and softly nurtured what ruddy health is to the dairymaid. There was the bright flow of the warm blood in her cheek, but that warm blood only served to animate a tint like alabaster, so clear, so soft, so

white in every part except where the rose, as we have said, breathed brighter on the cheek, and where a small blue vein wandered over the temple. Well might the old poet have addressed her as—

Lydia, bella puella candida
 Quæ bene superas lac et lilium
 Albamque simul rosam rubidam
 Aut expolitum ebur indicum.

But still neither upon feature, nor upon feature and complexion joined, did her beauty alone depend; her form was as lovely as her face. The small foot, the slender ankle, the rounded limbs, the neck, the shoulders, the bosom, down to the very taper fingers and tip of the clear chiseled ear, were each and all as full of beauty as her face. But not either form, or feature, or complexion, or all joined together, had satisfied nature when she made her—she had added the beauty of living animated grace to those limbs, and the beauty of expression to that countenance, so that all was harmony. The soul, the beautiful immortal soul—sweet Psyche's radiant shelf—shone out from the long dark lashes of those deep hazel eyes, and played about the small full indented mouth, and sat throned upon the clear polished brow: and equally moved in each bend of the head or motion of the limbs, or slept in grace over the whole form when it remained in beautiful repose.

It is high time to close the chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE old gentleman stood upright before his visitor, looking at him as he crossed the landing-place and entered the room, with that stare of perfect and enquiring unacquaintancehip with which we regard any *soi-disant* dear friend that we never saw before in all the days of our life—a sort of *who-the devil-are you?* look, which, in the present instance, a slight touch of irritation, proceeding from late and undeserved misfortunes, had engraven upon a countenance and demeanour naturally courteous. The young lady had raised her eyes for a moment at the sound of the stranger's

foot on the top step of the stairs, and seeing by the dim light of the maid's never-snuffed candle, a tall, dark figure looking straight into the room, she concluded that it was some one come on business to see her father, and dropping her eyes to her work she took no farther notice, though a half audible sigh—which, what between the things that were gone forever, and the things that might have been, had become habitual, whenever, after being roused for a moment, she fell back upon her own thoughts—now found its way through that sweet, small mouth as she applied herself to her task again.

The stranger as he entered, looked first at the father, and then seeing the expression which we have tried to describe, turned his eyes to the daughter, and, whether it was that they, his eyes, liked that direction better, or were struck, or puzzled, or what, matters not; but they remained there so long—two seconds are a long visit for the eyes—that the father's aspect had deepened into a frown by the time his visitor had come within four feet of him.

"Colonel Adair, I presume!" said the stranger, and—while the old gentleman answered sharply, "Yes, sir, my name is Adair! what are your commands?"—Miss Adair at the first sound of the stranger's voice looked up with a sort of start: and in a moment there was a bright glow spreading up into her clear fair brow and temples, like the setting sun pouring its last rays upon a high evening cloud.

"I believe I must first apply to Miss Adair to introduce me to her father!" answered the visitor, who had marked the glance of recognition which his voice had called up, and had not failed to notice with a thrill that made his breath come short, the glow by which that glance was followed. "This is Captain Lacy, Sir," she said, turning to her father, and at the same time giving their visitor her hand, "Have you been long returned from France, Captain Lacy?"

"About a month," replied Lacy, while her father gazed at him from head to foot.

"Do me the honour of taking a seat, Captain Lacy," said the old gentleman, "I am happy to see *you*—though the situation of my family, and the abode to which I am obliged to confine my ambition, have made me avoid all society."

Charles Lacy coloured slightly, for the exception in his favour made by Colonel Adair was evidently one of politeness, at least so he construed it. "Notwithstanding the acquaintance with Miss Adair which I had the pleasure of forming at the house of our worthy rector," he replied, "I should not have intruded upon you, Colonel Adair, had I not had the plea of business—though I cannot but confess," he added with a smile, "that of that plea I gladly availed myself."

"Shall I leave you, Sir?" asked Miss Adair, looking somewhat anxiously towards her father; but Captain Lacy interposed, exclaiming, "Pray do not Miss Adair; I may want you as a moderator between us. Your good father does not know me; and may treat me as a common man of the world, if you are not near to explain to him every now and then, that Charles Lacy means exactly what he says."

The old gentleman smiled, "Yes, yes," he said, "I do know you, Captain Lacy. My good friend, Doctor Bellingham has taught me *that*, amongst other things worth knowing; and I too say what I mean, when I assure you that I am happy to make your acquaintance, although not in a happy moment or a happy mood."

"I trust, my dear Sir," replied Lacy, as he took a seat, as near as he could do so without any very evident manœuvring, to Miss Adair, "I trust, my dear Sir, that you may not find the moment of so unhappy a character as you suppose, and that your mood may improve with it."

"As for myself," replied the old man, raising his head half an inch higher, "misfortune, Captain Lacy, could never sink my spirit, or oppress my heart—but," he added, casting himself heavily into a chair, "I have a child, Captain Lacy, and I cannot bear the thought of her being deprived of all the comforts and little elegancies of life by the fault of a d——d scoundrel," and he stamped his foot upon the floor somewhat sharply. "I am a fool," he continued, catching his daughter's eye turned anxiously towards him, "I am a fool, I know, to give way thus, but still it is hard to have borne up against some crosses in life with calmness and resignation, to have confined one's ambition to independence and mediocrity, when one was born to wealth and rank, to have avoided all repining, and wil-

lingly and knowingly to have shut the door against that class of society with which one was educated to mingle, and then to see oneself deprived of that very modicum to which one had stinted all one's hopes and aspirations."

"It is indeed very hard, my dear sir, and difficult to be borne," replied Captain Lacy; "and I am afraid," he added, with some hesitation, "I am afraid that my father may have appeared to act with some degree of harshness in this business."

"Not at all, sir! not at all!" replied the old officer, at the same time struggling hard to suppress all acerbity in his tone, though the feelings of his heart did still render his voice as dry as a roll of Latin poets fresh from Herculaneum. "Not at all, sir, that I see! He did nothing more than he had a right to do; not even that, indeed! It is true, sir, he did resume the farm which I had the honour of renting from him; and he did order the stock of the farm, and furniture of the house, *et cetera*, to be sold by auction; but as that sale only produced one year's rent, while I owed him two, Lord Methwyn might, by a proper process at law, have secured my person—might have sent me to goal, sir! and all very right and proper too, doubtless. Had I done so two years ago, sir, to my rascally agent, when he told me that by leaving my little property in his hands, I should save him from ruin, and make his fortune for life, I should not have been left pennyless in my old age, and more—your father's debtor to the amount of eleven hundred pounds. However, sir, your father, sir, shall be paid every farthing; there is, thank God, no chance of his losing the money."

"I feel perfectly sure of that, my dear sir," replied Captain Lacy; "and my father expresses himself excessively sorry for the harsh measures which have already been pursued. He says, indeed, that Mr. Williamson, the attorney—" Now for reasons best known to himself, Captain Lacy had been guarded in his assertions respecting his father, making use of the words, "He expresses himself," and "He says, indeed," without at all adopting the tale as his own; but no sooner did he mention the name of the attorney, than the old gentleman began to beat the toe of one boot against the toe of the other with an excessive degree of rapidity, and Miss Adair took advantage of a slight and

evidently embarrassed pause on Lacy's part to reply. "Oh, indeed, no ! Captain Lacy ; there must have been some mistake between Lord Methwyn and his lawyer. Mr. Williamson and his family behaved in the kindest and most considerate manner to us."

"It is to him, sir," added Colonel Adair, in a calmer tone than either his daughter or Captain Lacy expected ; "it is to him, sir, that we are indebted for the permission to remove such articles as that piano, that work-box, those books, and other things. They being my daughter's own property, presents from a relation now no more, Mr. Williamson conceived that the harshest construction was not to be put upon Lord Methwyn's letter, although the law, the just and wise law of England, might have brought them also to the hammer."

Captain Lacy's cheek turned red and white more than once, and there was no slight degree of embarrassment apparent in his whole demeanour while Colonel Adair spoke ; but the moment the other had finished, the embarrassment was at an end.

"I am excessively sorry, my dear sir," he replied, looking up frankly, "that such measures should have been used at all, and my father expresses himself equally sorry. Did he not do so, indeed, the grief that I feel would be doubled. The past of course I cannot repair, Colonel Adair ; but I wish to God that I had known Colonel Adair sufficiently long and intimately to render it no impertinence for me to meddle with the future."

Miss Adair looked up with a smile for a single instant, and then, as she saw that Lacy was turning his eyes with an inquiring, perhaps entertaining look, from her father to herself, she instantly resumed her work, and a slight blush fluttered over her cheek. Colonel Adair was a gentleman. I mean, not alone a man whose ancestors had been great amongst the children of earth, nor one who had mingled with men of polished manners all his life, nor one who had received a good education and profited by it ; but rather one, who with all these advantages, possessed originally a gentlemanly heart—that rare and inestimable jewel, which, besides being a talisman that guards us from all that is base and evil ourselves, acts as the finest touchstone for the discovery of true gold in others. Upon this touchstone the

words, and manner, and character of Captain Lacy left a clear, defined and brilliant mark which there was no mistaking, and that which he would have repelled with icy haughtiness in many another, Celonel Adair now heard with a mild smile, genile and courteous, but not without a touch of natural pride in its composition, which made him refuse without scorning a proposal which sprang from feelings that he could appreciate and admire.

"No, no, my dear sir, that cannot be," he replied; "but still, Captain Lacy, I am grateful for the interest that you take in me and mine; and though I in no degree presume to blame your father's actions, I may be permitted to say, that I do not in the least mingle you up therewith. Have you taken tea? I cannot do without the Chinese drug.—Helen, my love, ring for tea."

Now Captain Lacy, though he destested tea, resolved to stay and drink twenty cups thereof, if necessary, for he understood all the feelings of the old man's heart; and saw that the lingering posts of pride would end ere long under the influence of society, especially if he carried on his approaches cautiously against the last of the enemy's entrenchments. He first, therefore, determined to endeavour to send pride out riding in a different direction, and consequently while Miss Adair rang for tea, and prepared it in the best manner that the conveniences of a lodging would permit, he sat and talked to her father upon genealogy, asking whether he were not connected with the Lord Adair he had met not long before in Paris.

"He is my first cousin," replied the old gentleman; "and though a weak man, and an avaricious man, not a bad man, I believe: but we have not met or heard of each other for more than twenty years: and time changes our hearts as well as our faces, Captain Lacy."

"It does, indeed, my dear sir," replied Lacy; "but the character of Lord Adair remains much the same as you have depicted it. He has the credit of being miserly to an extraordinary degree; and when I saw him, was living in Paris, not at all in a manner corresponding to his rank and station. The family is very old, I believe; is it not?"

"As an old song!" replied Colonel Adair, smiling.—"Robert Adair, of tuneful repute, was, I fancy, the founder of the family. I am sorry to hear that my good cousin's

parsimony extends so far as to deny himself what is right. Such was not his character when I knew him."

"He was living with a single servant, in a third floor," rejoined Lacy; "and dining daily at a cheap ordinary. He himself declared that he came to Paris for economy; but other people said that his fortune was very large, and of course increasing."

"Large, indeed! Captain Lacy," replied Colonel Adair; "it consisted in fact of two fortunes, the original family property, and a second, which my grandfather made, or rather saved in India, before he succeeded to the title. The latter was destined for me; but I lost it by doing the wisest thing that ever man did—by marrying that dear girl's mother. My Grandfather's passion was pride; and having hesitated long whether he could most increase the family dignity by leaving his various estates to the heir of his title, or by creating another wealthy family of his own name, and giving the fortune he had saved in India to the younger branch, of which I was the representative; he had determined on the latter, when, lo and behold! I one day had the perversity to marry a clergyman's daughter instead of the person he had chosen for me, and the whole estates were left to my cousin, upon condition that he never either saw or spoke to me after—which condition he has faithfully performed."

"I suppose you gave him no great encouragement to violate it," replied Captain Lacy; "a man who could take advantage of such a circumstance, could be no very desirable acquaintance."

"Certainly not!" answered Colonel Adair. "I had enough for happiness—my pay and seven hundred a-year. All went well as long as I continued in active service; but I got terribly wounded at Albuera, quarrelled afterwards with Crawfurd, who was an excellent officer, but as hot as pepper; and retiring on half pay, fancied I could farm—which after all is a vice. The rest you know: I trusted to a rascal—took his advice in every thing—left my money in his hands, and am ruined. It is a common case, Captain Lacy—it is a common case, I am afraid."

"But what is not a common case, my dear sir," replied Lacy, laying his hand kindly upon that of Colonel Adair, glad to have made so much progress, and resolved to push

on while the gates of the citadel were open, "but what is not a common case is, that you who have trusted implicitly to a rascal, will not now trust to an honest man. Colonel Adair, I am resolved to be very obtrusive—nay more—to bring the matter to an end at once, I will speak to you as an old soldier, and tell you that you must surrender at discretion; for there are three practicable breaches in your heart, and I can march in when I will.—Sir, the place is not tenable!"

Colonel Adair paused; for pride would fain have made him angry, but good feeling and good temper got a complete triumph; and his pause ended with a laugh, "Well, well, Captain Lacy," he said, "I do surrender—but what are the three breaches you talk of? I do not see how my heart should be so very indefensible."

"First, because the heart of a man of honour is seldom very sternly shut against a man of honour," answered Lacy; "Secondly, I think I could make my way in through good Doctor Bellingham, who wrote to me, telling me where you were, and assuring me of a kind reception; and had all failed, I should not have scrupled even to have taken Miss Adair by the hand, and have besought her to entreat her father to confide in one—in one—" Lacy paused and hesitated, but then added, "in one who would not wrong her intercession."

"More like three breaching batteries than three breaches," replied Colonel Adair, "but as I have capitulated I must say no more, and now my dear sir, let Helen give you some tea, and we will talk more hereafter."

The only time when a man is justified in doing any thing that is disagreeable to himself, is when he is intent upon doing a good action. Lacy therefore took the proffered tea, and while drop by drop he made it linger out for a full half hour, he talked to Miss Adair of old friends, and old scenes, and old meetings, and to her father of changes, and politics, and war, and all the wonderful things of the last twenty years, till if you had given either of them one half of the Grand Mogul's dominions, they could not have looked upon Captain Lacy as anything but an old friend. The way he managed it was, he spoke to them as an old friend himself, with that ease and suavity of manner which is so captivating, especially where it is joined to singular graces of person

and mind. His tone too, and his address were so perfectly those of a gentleman, his manners were so polished without being ceremonious, his demeanour was so much that of a man of high breeding and high rank, without even the slightest particle of that supercilious civility, which marks the consciousness of condescension, that the most irritable spot in the wounded heart of "fallen estate" would not have shrunk under that gentle touch. The polish of his manners was congenial to all the feelings of Colonel Adair and his daughter, because they were themselves people of high breeding; and Lacy contrived to act and speak towards them as if he were precisely in the very same rank and station of life with themselves, not a bit higher, not a bit lower, not a bit more or less fortunate or unfortunate, so that pride had not a foot of ground to stand upon against him; but he found as the time wore away, and the conversation continued upon indifferent topics, that he had committed an error in strategy when he suffered it to be diverted from the point. His manœuvres to recover his position however were skilful. First, he began to talk of the country in which Colonel Adair had lately been living, and then even of the farm which that gentleman had occupied under his own father. Thence he turned to farming in general, and laughing added, that he believed it was an occupation which should be left entirely in the hands of those who had been brought up to it.

"Perhaps you are right! perhaps you are right!" replied Colonel Adair, "and yet do you know, Captain Lacy, I was proceeding very successfully, when I was so unexpectedly stopped in full career. The first three years were certainly pure loss, but last year and the present, all that I had laid out on the land was beginning to bear very fair fruit, and I had every prospect of obtaining a very good return."

"Most unfortunate indeed that you should have been cut off from carrying on your proceedings, just when they were becoming successful," replied Captain Lacy; "but tell me, my dear sir, do you intend resuming the same pursuits?"

"How can I, my dear friend?" cried the old gentleman, almost crossly. "Did I not tell you that this rascal, this agent, this Jones Jenkinson, had absconded with every thing he he could carry off? The very furniture of his

house, and the splendid plate on which he used to feed the gulls he plundered, were disposed of before he went. I tell you, my dear sir, he has not left me one farthing upon earth!"

"And yet you told me not long ago," replied Lacy, in a grave but kindly tone, "that it was your intention to pay my father the small debt you owe him immediately. Now, Colonel Adair, if you purpose doing anything rash and imprudent for the sake of discharging a claim which can stand over for any length of time without inconvenience to any one, I can assure you—"

"It cannot stand over, my good young friend," interrupted Colonel Adair, "without inconvenience to my honour, to my feelings, and to my peace. I tell you fairly, Captain Lacy, as I hold my half pay as Lieutenant Colonel by purchase, it is my intention to sell out. The sum thus obtained will enable me to pay all I owe, and leave me some little thing to go on with till I can arrange some plan for the future."

"Just what I expected!" answered Lacy, "and what I can assure you, you shall not execute if you have any value for the friendship of Charles Lacy—and I am vain enough, my dear colonel, to think his friendship worth having! Why, my dear sir, should you dream of selling out, when you can easily borrow the money—if you are resolved to pay a debt in regard to which there is no haste—when you can easily borrow the money at a much less sacrifice in the way of interest?"

"But who will lend me money without security?" asked Colonel Adair with a melancholy smile. "No, no, Laey; my plan is the only feasible one. When it is executed, I may show you how much I value your friendship, and how sincere I hold you, by asking your advice on my future fate—nay, perhaps by employing your interest, if you possess any."

"What I have is at your service," replied Lacy, "but still, you must not, and shall not sell out. You know not what can be done in London—I can let you have the money myself—but then seeing a quick rush of blood tinge the old man's cheek with deeper red, while his eye wandered for a moment to his daughter, Captain Lacy went on; "but I will not press that, as it may be disagreeable to you. All

I can tell you is, that these things are done every day in London, and that if you like to empower me to seek it for you, the money shall be in your hands before mid-day to-morrow, with nothing more than legal interest to pay for it, and no obligation to any one."

"Infinite obligations to you, Captain Lacy," cried Colonel Adair, grasping his hand, "and yet I cannot understand how you will manage it. Remember, I tell you, I have no security to give."

"That is nothing, that is nothing," answered Lacy, laughing, "I can assure you our young men of fashion, who have not only no security to give, but are also over head and ears in debt already, find no difficulty in procuring money daily. Leave the matter to me! I pledge my word for it; and I think, my dear sir, that instead of selling your half pay, it will be much better for you to try and get into active service again."

"You are an enthusiast, Captain Lacy!" said Colonel Adair calmly, "and your kindness makes you jump over obstacles which are insurmountable to my less sanguine reason. Even were we in the midst of war, I possess no interest sufficient to carry through what you propose; how much less can I hope for such a thing in the midst of profound peace, and at the end of long and severe hostilities, when the only thing thought of is reduction?"

"You have made me a most decided promise, my dear sir," replied Lacy, "to use my interest, such as it is; and as to war, I believe we are going to be gratified to the full of our most bellicose anticipations. Have you not heard that Napoleon Buonaparte has landed in Provence, and that as he marches towards Paris his forces are increasing every hour? There is even a report in town to-night that Marshal Macdonald has been defeated at Meulan, and it seems certain that Louis XVIII. has fled from Paris. War it would appear is inevitable, and of course a number of men must be called into active service. Why not you among the rest?"

"God grant it may be so!" cried the old soldier, but the sweet, soft colour in his daughter's cheek faded away as Lacy spoke, leaving her for a moment very pale. "Why Helen, you are not afraid!" continued her father. "Fie! you are a soldier's child, my love, and should thank Cap-

tain Lacy as much as I do, for the prospect he holds out, and the kindness that prompts him."

"Indeed I do thank him most sincerely," replied Miss Adair, the colour coming back into her cheeks with more than its former brightness as she raised her eyes to Lacy's face; "and although I cannot but feel agitated and alarmed at such sudden tidings of a renewal of the war, yet my courage will come back, my dear father depend upon it, when the moment of trial comes." Lacy gazed at her for a moment in silence, and then suddenly casting his eyes to the ground fell into a deep reverie which continued several minutes. The paleness which he too had marked, and the comment which her father's words had read thereon, led his mind on into the future, and busy fancy conjured up all the events which might follow from the suggestion which he had that night made. That beautiful, that gentle, that interesting creature, he thought, might be left alone in the wide world, unprotected, unbefriended, in consequence of the very plans he had formed for her benefit; and after a long pause Lacy took his leave, and promising to be with Colonel Adair again ere noon on the following day, walked slowly and thoughtfully back towards his home.

CHAPTER III.

Tooh! tooh! tooh! whooh! tooh! blew a man on a long tin horn, since put down by act of Parliament; and immediately after, there sounded a voice in Captain Lacy's ear, shouting in true stentorian cockney, a language, which, ere many years be over, will, it is feared, be utterly corrupt—"Great news; bloody news! third edition of the Evening Coury-eer! paepah, your honour! great news, can assure you! that 'ere infernal warmint, Napolion Bonyparty has taken Paris by storm! Take a paepah your honour!" Captain Lacy shook his head, and the man, putting his trumpet to his lips, rushed on with a most vengeful blast, calling up from areas, and out from hall doors, the inquiring faces of all the gods and goddesses of the lower regions, and every now and then stopping to sell some of the pepper and salt sheets of print, which derive their principal

interest from the crimes, miseries, and follies of our fellow-creatures, and very often, excite as much of each as they detail. By this time the rain had ceased, and though the moon had not made her appearance, a thousand twinkling jewels might be seen in the sky, as the thin vapours, which yet remained, were waved about by the breath of a light wind. The starry robe of night was there certainly, but somewhat crumpled and dirty, and Lacy, as he looked up to the sky, found small consolation in its aspect for all the dirt and mud through which he was destined to wend his way homeward. As he had sallied forth upon the expedition, in which we found him engaged at first, he had been cheered by companionship, and by an object, so that he had experienced no more active consciousness of walking out in the rain, than was just requisite to unfurl his umbrella ; but as he returned, the companionship no longer existed, and the object had been reached, so that he naturally found the streets very dull and disagreeable, and hurried on as fast as possible. It is the worst plan in the world, however, to try to get on fast in any thing—whether in the high roads of ambition, the bye-paths of intrigue, the flowery ways of love, or the dirty streets of a Metropolis—for whenever one endeavours to arrive at a certain place, within a certain time, somebody is sure to step up every ten paces, and taking you by the button-hole, to call you, “ My dear sir ! ” If you wish to go fast, always determine to go slow ; for there is a sort of perversity in the temper of Mrs. Destiny, which will make her cross you if she possibly can.

Scarcely had Lacy passed through Hanover Square and entered Bond Street—for like all wise men, he had a mortal aversion to coming and going the same way—when the jingling of a ferocious pair of spurs struck his eye, and the next moment he was confronted with a bewhiskered and besurfed young man, somewhat his junior in years, and inferior in size, who accosted him with a “ Good evening, Captain Lacy ! ”

“ Ah ! good evening, Williamson,” he replied, “ I thought you were in the country with your friends. When did you arrive ? ” “ Only this morning,” answered the other. “ All this news from France made me think it high time to look about me ; and as my father was coming up to settle some business with old Colonel Adair, I thought I might

as well come too. You remember the old Colonel and his pretty daughter! a beautiful girl, Helen Adair, by Jove!"

Lacy grew an inch taller: "Miss Adair I have had the pleasure of knowing some time," he replied coldly, "her father I never met till to-night."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the other, "Why I thought you must have known them very well. They have been tenants of your father's such a long while!"

"But you forget that I have been either in Spain or France almost the whole time," answered Lacy in the same dry tone; "besides, as far as I can understand, Colonel Adair has only been in that farm four or five years."

"Aye, true!" answered the other, "I forgot! We knew them before—my father has known the old gentlemen long, and his cousin, Lord Adair too, even better. Lord Adair's son, you know, is a great crony of mine—we were school-fellows—and he comes down to our place every year. But we were talking of Helen Adair—devilish fine girl! is'nt she?"

"A very beautiful girl certainly," replied Lacy, "but nothing devilish have I seen either in her manners or her looks."

"Oh, that's only a way of speaking, you know," answered the other. "I must go and see them, 'pon' my honour. She is really a beautiful girl—I shall burn my fingers there some day!—I know I shall—she is so very hand-some."

The word "puppy!" almost escaped from Lacy's lips, but he restrained himself, and merely replied, "A man must be very foolish ever to burn his fingers knowingly. —But Mr. Williamson, will you do me the favour of telling your father, that should his business with Colonel Adair refer to any of my family's concerns, he had better suspend all proceedings, till he has spoken with Lord Methwyn on the subject. Where is your father to be found?"

"Oh, at the house in Hill Street!" replied the other; "our house in Hill Street!"

"I did not know that you had a house in town at all," answered Lacy, "that must be a new acquisition, surely!"

"Yes! last year!" replied the other in the same coxcombical tone. "My father's business called him so often

to London, and he is likely to have so many cases before the House of Peers, that he thought it best to buy a house in town, especially as my sisters are soon to be presented, you know."

"No! I did not know at all!" answered Lacy. "However do me the favour to tell your father what I have said. Lord Methwyn does not know he is in town, and wrote him a letter to-day to the effect I have mentioned, which letter must have missed him. But I perceive clearly that there has already been some mistake between my father and your's, in regard to the proceedings which have taken place against Colonel Adair; and therefore to prevent any thing more occurring of the same disagreeable nature, nothing further must be done till a full explanation has taken place. Good night!" and turning on his heel, Lacy walked on, biting his lip, under the influence of manifold feelings, which we shall not pause to analyse.

On arriving in Portman Square, Lacy immediately proceeded to his own apartments, and dressed, which he had not done before dinner, as his father had dined out, and he himself had only shared his meal with an old military comrade. Over the arrangement of his toilet, presided a personage, who, without being the most scientific valet who ever tied a cravat, was nevertheless, well calculated to make his master's dress harmonize with his character, which is indeed the great art—or rather the true philosophy for a valet-de-chambre. He was a silent and a thoughtful man too, which suited Lacy well—not without genius in his own particular way, and with honesty tried by ten years' service with his present master, at home and abroad, in peace and in war. Very respectful was he likewise in his demeanour, though long attendance upon Captain Lacy, in many of those scenes and circumstances, which make the dust of ceremony and the chaff of etiquette fly about like bran before the north-wind, had purchased for him a certain freedom of speech when he chose to make use of the privilege.—It was exercised but seldom, however, for he was, as we have said, taciturn from prudence, though be it remarked, that his taciturnity and its foregoing prudence originated in two strong and sufficient causes, namely, respect for his master and respect for himself. He never said anything to his master that he was not sure of, for he argued,

“ The Captain is very exact himself, and if he were to find me out in a mistake, what would he think of me ? ”

On the present occasion he went on assisting Lacy in his toilet without uttering a word, and indeed from the gravity that sat upon his master’s countenance, it required no great skill to determine that thought, and not conversation, was to be the order of the day. The world without was quiet also; for a momentary calm had fallen upon the general thunder-storm of London streets. The rush and the rolling, the trampling and the shouting, were still, and even the clanking step of the mud-defying patten was unheard, though Lacy’s dressing room overlook the street. Lacy meditated in quiet, not with the calm and misty meditation of one whose easy mind—free from the dull lesson of real life, taught by the hard task-masters called necessity and apprehension—plays at marbles with time, and circumstance, and probability, in the great playground of imagination; but with the deep, anxious thought of one, who having chosen a determined part, and fixed his mind upon a certain object, sees before him an infinity of obstacles which will require time, and patience, and skill, and energy, and perseverance to overcome; and who knowing some weakness in his own bosom, finds it necessary to fix before-hand every turn and course that is to be taken, to foresee every difficulty, and to provide for every contingency.

The wise and learned reader may perhaps be puzzled to divine what difficulties, dangers, and uncomorts could be lying in wait for the steps of a man in Charles Lacy’s situation. He commanded the H. troop of the —— regiment of —— dragoons; but there was nothing very difficult in that. Then he was the only son of a peer, the heir of a large property, and already in possession of some four or five thousand a-year, which had descended to him from his mother. All these misfortunes however might be borne patiently, without covering oneself with the cloak of the Stoics, or even borrowing a rag from the tattered robe of Diogenes. He neither found his fortune nor his expectations an incumbrance, but endured the whole with wonderful fortitude, and had it not been for one little peculiarity in his situation, he might have been the happiest man alive. But an event had happened to him which does hap-

pen about once in a hundred years, and not oftener. He had fallen really and sincerely in love! "How then," it may be asked, "does this only happen once in a hundred years? What then are all the love matches we hear of? Are they not brought about by love?"

Once in a hundred years, dear reader!—and all the rest are concluded upon a simple principle discovered not very many years ago by natural philosophers, called the attraction of cohesion, whereby particles of matter, that is to say, men and women, being brought within a certain distance of each other, adhere or cohere, neither they nor any one else know why or wherefore. Love is a very difficult thing—an attraction of a very different kind. It is the combination of all the most powerful inducements that can act upon man's heart and soul, upon his body and his mind, drawing him with irresistible force to unite his fate for ever to that of another. Admiration, and sympathy, and tenderness, and desire, and esteem, are some of the many precious things that go to form the mighty mithridate called love, and without all, and each, and every one of these, it is but a counterfeit. The love of Charles Lacy however, was entire and perfect, deep, strong, and enduring, yet ardent, passionate and tender; but it had too its history like every other love, and being here in the middle of our tale, according to the old Roman's much approved receipt, we may as well go back and tell the beginning.

Charles Lacy had for several years served with the army of the Peninsula, and when the war was suddenly brought to an end, he gladly returned for a short space to his own country. He found his father in town, but the sweet recollections of infancy and boyhood, and a disposition fond of nature's face as little covered with the warts that we call houses as possible, soon led him down to his family estates in the country. Those estates lay in a beautiful but remote spot, where Captain Lacy knew no one whose mind and tastes were at all upon a par with his own, except the rector of the parish; and the rectory was consequently much more his abode while he remained in the country than his own paternal dwelling. The rector and his wife were old people, of an old family, and without children; but it happened, that during her father's temporary absence, Miss Adair, who was to them as a child, had invited herself to

spend a fortnight with Dr. and Mrs. Bellingham ; and it so occurred, that before the second day of that fortnight was over, Charles Lacy took up his abode in their neighbourhood. Who it is that arranges such things I do not know; but I am confident that that blind, careless jade, Dame Fortune, has not wit enough to bring about such nice arrangements without help. However so it was ; and Charles Lacy saw Helen Adair every day, and Helen Adair saw Charles Lacy ; and from thinking her the most beautiful girl he had ever beheld, Lacy began to think her the most graceful and the most amiable, the sweetest and the best. What Helen Adair thought of him is another question, but certain it is that he was not in the least frightened at what he felt, and fancied that like the changing moon, the bright thing that lit up the heaven of imagination would wane as it had waxed. It is wonderful how often under such circumstances being frightened is done by proxy ; and how frequently when a rich youth sits close and long beside the white satin petticoat of a poor beauty, or a great heiress listens complacently to the scarlet oratory of a lieutenant in a marching regiment, all the aunts, and cousins, and uncles, and mothers, are frightened beyond all conception *as deputies* for those in danger. The person who took the liberty of being frightened upon the present occasion was no other than good Mrs. Bellingham, who saw all sorts of dangers and difficulties in the train of love between Charles Lacy and Helen Adair, and though she wisely resolved to do nothing to prevent a matter which is altogether an affair of destiny, yet she determined that he, Charles Lacy, should not walk about with his eyes shut any longer. Taking therefore the freedom of one who had known him from his youth, Mrs. Bellingham one day gave him a hint in a quiet, easy way, that he was falling in love with Helen Adair ; and the consequence was that Lacy rode home in somewhat of a thoughtful mood. He felt that he *was* falling in love with Helen Adair, and as he was not one of those men who set about falling in love systematically whenever they find an opportunity, he only asked himself one question, which was, whether any just cause existed for his supposing that the heart of Helen Adair was as far entangled even as his own. To ascertain that fact he paid one more visit to the rectory, and convinced himself that if ever

girl was heart whole, it was Miss Adair ; though the first named fortnight had now, by her father's prolonged absence, been extended to two. His resolution was instantly formed to quit England, and let the half-lighted fire go out for want of fuel. His determination was accordingly executed with vigorous promptitude ; and instead of following the plan of the ancient Damons and Phillises, and betaking himself to green fields and purling streams, and all those scenes of natural beauty where soft fancies feed and fatten like flocks of sheep, he went straight to Paris,—the best place in Europe for killing love,—and tried to amuse himself from morning till night. The remedy was as severe a one as any in the code of Sangrado ; but one cannot have one's heart pulled as one does an aching tooth, and Lacy began to discover that the evil had gone farther than he had fancied at first. As soon as he perceived that such was the case, he sat down and calculated manfully all the objections to following the course upon which his heart would have led him, and he found that they were likely to be so great and manifold that it was worth a farther struggle to avoid them. For several months that struggle continued, and he endeavoured by mingling with all that was beautiful and graceful in the French capital, to dull the longing memory of that one fair face that haunted him in all the walks of life. At the end of that time, however, he felt that he loved Helen Adair more than when last he had seen her ; and as this was the strongest proof in the world that his absence was doing him no good, he put himself into his carriage, and equipping Cupid with a pair of jack boots and a pigtail, galloped back to England as hard as he could go.

Various matters kept him in London for a fortnight, during which time he wrote to his good friend, Dr. Bellingham, informing him of his return to his native land ; and telling him that in a few days he would visit him in the country. Not a word did he say of Helen Adair ; but Dr. Bellingham, who was a mild, quiet man, understood a great deal more of Charles Lacy's heart than Charles Lacy knew of ; and his reply informed his young friend of all the harsh measures which had been pursued towards Colonel Adair, whose address, in London, the worthy rector took care to subjoin. Lacy's journey was accordingly postponed *sine*

die ; and the first fruits of the information he had received, we have already seen.

Every man on earth is a walking diorama, and no one who has not beheld the effect both of sunshine and shade, can tell what the picture is really like ; but having now given the readers this peep into the bosom of Charles Lacy, and for their benefit brought the clouds over the scene within, it will not be difficult to understand how the colouring, which was all light and sunshine to the eye of the general world, should, in the privacy of his own chamber, be grave and dim.

Lacy loved ; but he had seen no very decided cause to believe himself loved in return ; and strange to say, even had he known that what he felt for Helen Adair was not without an answering voice in her heart, his perplexity would have been hardly less. So much was this the case indeed, that he hesitated whether by any means he should endeavour to ascertain what were her feelings towards him, at least ere the political storm, which he saw gathering over Europe, had burst. Such circumstances then might well furnish forth matter for deep thought, but there were a variety of other perplexities which shot across and across the texture of his fate, and like the wavy lines in what is called a wa- tered silk, assumed a thousand different shades, according to the lights in which they were viewed. There is nothing like method and order for disentangling ideas of all sorts, and as Linnæus found no difficulty in arranging all the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, according to their proper orders, Lacy now determined to classify his perplexities, and deal with them one by one, in which laudable occupation we shall follow him.

First, then, he subdivided his difficulties into three heads ; those that regarded his father, those that regarded her father, and those that regarded herself. The difficulties in his way, as far as his father was concerned, were again of two dis- tinct sorts, which may be called *mammonish* and *luciferish*. Lord Methwyn had, as Lacy well knew, a very gentle- manly love for money ; it went no farther than that. He was not yet old enough, or stupid enough, or impotent enough, to be avaricious. He had a high respect, not so much for the wealth as for the things that the wealth gives,— the pleasures, the luxuries, the importance. Then he was

proud too—not in the least haughty. He was a great deal too witty, and too wise, and too much of a gentleman to be haughty. No one is ever haughty but an upstart or a fool. Yet, though in both these passions he was moderate, and never suffered them to lead him beyond a certain degree, yet as far as they did lead him, he was perfectly inflexible. He was one of those men who are calm and cool in their determinations, calm and cool in their manners, and as a good foundation for all sorts of gentlemanly proprieties, calm and cool in their hearts. He would have been as sorry to see his son perish in any way, as it was possible for him to be on any account; but he would have seen his son perish twenty times over rather than yield one point on which he had decided. All this Lacy knew quite well, and therefore when the question was in regard to marrying a girl without a sixpence, in a small lodging, in a back street, many were his perplexities concerning his father.

Next came her father for consideration, and although no two men on earth could be more different than the two fathers, Lacy, who entered into Colonel Adair's character almost intuitively, perceived that the most opposite qualities would lead him to be as intractable, in regard to this business, as Lord Methwyn. He felt that Colonel Adair would shrink from the bare idea of marrying his poverty to Lord Methwyn's wealth, as he would from dishonour; and that if, under his present circumstances, he heard the slightest hint of an attachment between that lord's son and his daughter, he would instantly do some of those very noble-minded, but very foolish things, which by one hasty act destroy foundations on which, however unpromising, Time seldom fails to build up, if we will let him, a solid fabric for happiness to dwell in. His perplexities therefore, on this score also, would not have been small, even had they been complicated by no other affairs; but when he remembered the facts of Colonel Adair's debt to his father, and the collision which must thence ensue, he felt that all his care and all his prudence would be required to steer his bark aright amongst the troubled waves that surrounded it.

The next and greatest perplexity regarded Miss Adair herself. How was Lacy to steer his course with her? When he had quitted her in the country, he had made up his mind completely to the belief, that she was as yet totally

indifferent to him. This may seem strange; and the learned reader may exclaim, "Why every good-looking gentlemanly young man thinks every girl under forty in love with him before he has spoken to her ten minutes;" and this sage general rule may be true, but every general rule has its exception, and Lacy was that exception in the present instance. When he quitted Dr. Bellingham's house, he *did not* think Helen Adair in love with him. Though he saw that she certainly did not dislike his society, yet he made a distinction between that feeling and love; and had he continued to entertain the same belief in her indifference, his perplexities might have been less. On that very evening, however, he had remarked, with the keen and anxious eyes of love, some passing *emotions* fit over the lovely countenance of Helen Adair, which caused strange feelings in his own breast. Even when he had first come in, a small fine ray of love-coloured light had beamed forth from her beautiful eyes, and, striking at once upon the cornea of his, had found its way through the aperture in the retina, lingered a moment to gain strength in the crystalline lens, and then passing along the optic nerve to the brain, had thence run thrilling from the one sensorium to the other, from the head to the heart, with a sensation which you may have felt, madam, but had better not attempt to describe. The beams of brightness in those beautiful eyes of hers had been followed by a glow upon the cheek and the brow unlike any thing upon earth: for, although such glows have been compared to roses and carnations, and as many fruit and flowers as would furnish forth a horticultural exhibition, yet on fruit and flowers the bright colour which the kiss of the warm sun leaves behind, is permanent, unvarying, fixed, while the very excellence of such a blush as that, is the flickering, changing, rapid, but gentle progress of the rosy flood over the fair cheek, betokening the softness, and sweetness, and quickness of the emotions from which it springs. Lacy saw and felt it all, and from that moment, for the first time, fancied that he might have some small interest in the heart of Helen Adair.

It were vain to say that such a hope was not delightful to him. It were vain to say that it did not *make* his heart beat joyously; but still, it brought its perplexities along with it, and these formed the third class of perplexities

with which he had now to deal. Lacy was not a man to trifle with the heart of woman for a moment. In her dealings with the ruder, the more powerful, and the less restrained part of the race, woman has no defence against a thousand nameless ills, except in man's generosity. The fine and delicate organization of her mind; the tender and hot-house sensations of her heart, bear no rude touch or chill air without injury and decay, and cruel and base is he who lays a rough hand upon so bright but so destructible a thing as the heart of woman. But Charles Lacy was the soul of honour, and he would have felt it to be as great a disgrace, where he had sought love, to trifle with it, as to falsify his word. What then could he do in regard to Helen Adair? If he hesitated to avow his love, he might keep her in that pain and that uncertainty which he would not have inflicted upon any woman, much less on one he loved: and yet if he avowed his love, and obtained an avowal of hers in return, he could not ask her to treat a kind and anxious father with unworthy want of confidence, and conceal from Colonel Adair a fact which so much affected the happiness of one in whom his own happiness was wrapped up.—Were Colonel Adair once told of Charles Lacy's love for his daughter, might not his pride take arms at the very idea of the great disparity in the fortunes of their families, and with the usual conduct of pride in arms destroy the comfort of all around? He doubted it not, and the only question was how to avoid such a catastrophe. There was but one way, but that one way was somewhat harder than any of the labours of Hercules. By some means, heaven knows what, to repair the ruined fortunes of Colonel Adair; at least so far as both to make him lose sight of any great difference of situation between himself and Lord Methwyn, and also to smooth the descent for his lordship's expectations for his son, from rich heiresses to a poor beauty, by removing all the little obstacles which might pique his pride as well as his worldliness; this was the only means which presented itself to Charles Lacy, and it may easily be perceived that the undertaking was nearly as weighty as that of Atlas. But Charles Lacy was in love, and what is there that he would not have done for Helen Adair? He had no very fixed plan upon the subject, it is true; but he possessed considerable interest and considerable influence with dif-

ferent people, and in different ways, and to use all his influence and all his interest to raise Colonel Adair rather than himself, was the general outline of his design.

In the mean time he resolved to let matters take their own course with her he loved, so to act and so to speak as to leave no doubt upon her mind in regard to the nature of his feelings towards her, trusting that her knowledge of his character and her confidence in his honour would be sufficient to guard her against anxiety and apprehension. To these conclusions his mind had just arrived, when his body, acting under the mute guidance of his valet, had completed his toilet. Lacy stared habitually in the glass to see what he was like, and was then turning towards the door, when a rush of wheels and a thundering knock told of some arrival; and the next moment he heard his father's voice, and hastened down stairs to meet him.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLES LACY was a man of undaunted courage. From sixteen to six-and-twenty he had been hardly a day without confronting an enemy, and from Torres Vedras to Toulouse he had walked on side by side with Wellington and victory. Charles Lacy was afraid of nothing upon earth—no, not even his own father; and though he knew very well, that they were just like two armies of observation at the expiration of a truce, upon the very brink of hostilities, he walked down calmly to meet him, and finding that he had taken up his position in the library, followed him thither.

Lord Methwyn was standing at the library table, laying down thereon a multitude of papers, some written, some printed, and bearing about with them strong marks of the House of Lords. The peer was nearly as tall as his son, and a good deal stouter, but well-made, and as yet, not at all corpulent. His leg was good, and his hand was white, and having been early in the service, he retained a strong military look, though he had retired many years, and at the time we speak of, was never in the habit of committing any more flagrant martial iniquity, than reviewing a body of volunteers, or inspecting the yeomanry of the county. In

those days, men in general dressed themselves like gentlemen, when they went to attend the senate, and on the present occasion, Lord Methwyn, who was always attentive to his dress, was attired with peculiar care. His person and face, however, were of that cast which do more for the dress than the tailor can do; and his countenance, indeed, was well calculated to call attention to itself, not because the features were striking, but because they were all gentlemanly. There was nothing at all peculiar in his face, except that, as we have said, all the features were good. There was no eye straining after effect on one side, while its more modest brother was contented to move in its natural orbit; his cheek bones did not stretch their boundaries far and wide towards his ears, his nose had no disposition to leap into his mouth, nor did his chin aspire to a higher place than his nose. For a man of his age, his teeth were remarkably fine, and his eyes clear and undimmed, for no tears had they ever known, and their most fatiguing employment was reading a romance. In regard to expression, his countenance was calm and tranquil, one upon which, it was easy to see, that no strong passions had ever exercised their searing influence. No very bitter frowns had ever wrinkled his brow, nor ever any violent laughter had shaken the muscles of his cheeks from their calm propriety. A smile indeed was a very customary visitor to his lip, for he was well satisfied with himself, with his own condition, with his own prospects for the future, and his own conduct in the past; he was well satisfied with his son, with his friends, with his acquaintances, and with the world; and all this, not with the satisfaction of a fool, but the satisfaction of a wise and witty man, who having taken the precaution of shutting against sorrow, all the doors of ardent affection, sits down contented with thinking, that if things might have been a little better in some respects, they might have been a great deal worse in many others. Thus, why should he not have smiled often and benignantly? and besides, he had a great many opportunities of smiling, for he had a considerable share of quiet wit, which, being in no degree boisterous or offensive, he took no pains to restrain: and as the world had been told that he was witty, and were, consequently, on the watch to understand his good things, he benevolently gave notice of when he was

about to say anything pointed, by suffering a slight, but meaning smile to play round his lip for a few moments previously, which was redoubled when the hit was made, and the auditors laughed thereat. Men of no principles—and though Lord Methwyn had a great many proprieties, he had but few principles, properly so called—can always afford to be a great deal wittier than other men, for they can draw upon many a fund that is shut to the man of feeling, or religion, or strict morality. Now his lordship was really by no means a bad or an unkind man, but yet he would not scruple to let his jest fall upon what was holy, or pure, or tender, or noble. These jests were, it is true, more playful than strong, and were always couched in language that deprived them of all asperity ; but, perhaps they were the more dangerous for that very reason, for many a mind that would rise in arms if it saw what it knew to be right boldly assailed, would be silent, partly amused, partly ashamed, when it beheld virtue laughed at. Yet let us not misrepresent his lordship, nor be misunderstood ourselves. He never went out of his way to jest on subjects that other men revered, he never sought an irreverent joke, or somewhat unclean witticism, or smart equivoque. He indulged in all, or any, when they came in his way, but that was all, and he thought himself a very virtuous man in so doing.

As we have said, the papers in his hand bore not only internal, but external evidence of having found their way out of the House of Lords, for on the identical document which he was laying down, at the moment that his son entered, was inscribed in large letters, “An act to amend an act,” which words he was reading over to himself with the peculiarly preliminary smile we have mentioned, as preceding something smart. As Charles Lacy’s footstep caught his ear, he turned round, well pleased that it was not to be lost, and pointing with his finger carelessly, he read, “An act to amend an act !—and thus it is every day Charles,” he continued, “our acts are like our highways, no sooner made than they want mending ; and I’ll tell you what, my dear boy, the lawyers are the tollmen, who stop every one according to law, and take a fee, ere they let them pass.”

“ Your Lordship is severe,” said Lacy, “ but I suppose

you come from the House, where, from all I hear, sharp words, are somewhat common."

"Twill soon be a bear garden, Charles," replied his father, "nay, it is already ! One great leader hounds on his curs upon another, till all parties are tired and hurt; the public, who are spectators of this bear garden, lose their money in mad bets upon the brutes thus let loose upon each other, and then the leaders cry, stave and tail ! and the show is over for the night !"

"Was there anything new going forward?" demanded Lacy, whose thoughts were somewhat busy with the approaching war.

"Oh nothing new!" replied his father, "there were Lords E—— and G—— spoke as if they had been patriots, and some of our good friends even went so far as to try and persuade their compeers that they are honest men, and all that: but that is as old as a miser's coat. Besides, nobody ever knows anything new in that place. It is the last place on earth where information takes up its abode, Charles; but have you not been at the opera? That is a much better place for news."

"No, I did not go," replied Lacy, finding that it was time to bring the conversation to the point he wanted to reach: "I went to see old Colonel Adair, on whose affairs good Dr. Bellingham wrote to me yesterday."

"Aye, poor old gentleman! he made a bad speculation of his farm, I am afraid," replied the peer, in a very different tone from that which Lacy had expected to hear him employ, "Williamson gives a very bad account both of his affairs and his prudence."

"Are you sure, my dear sir, that Williamson is not a great rascal?" demanded his son.

"No, no!" replied the peer, "I am afraid he is not—I do not feel sure he is."

"Afraid not!" cried Lacy, "why, my lord, you would not wish for a rascal in such a capacity, surely!"

"Why not?" demanded his father with a smile; "rascals can only hurt the poor or the confiding, and I am neither the one nor the other, you know. No, no, Charles, a rascal is a very good sort of a person when properly managed. Only make it his interest to serve you, and

he'll serve you well. No, no, give me a good rascal ! But I am afraid Williamson is but a poor foolish honest man."

" I do not feel quite so sure of that fact as your lordship seems to be," replied Charles Lacy, " but at all events, in regard to Colonel Adair, he has acted with extreme harshness, as your lordship admitted when I spoke of the matter yesterday. He not only ejected Colonel Adair from the farm in the harshest manner, but sold off all that the house contained, or that covered the ground ;—that too at a moment when he knew that Colonel Adair was in temporary difficulties from the failure of his agent, and when the farm itself was in the most flourishing state. Was not this going very far in severity ?"

" A great deal further than I intended, Charles, or could have wished," replied his father. " He wrote me a long story upon the subject, setting forth the imprudence of Colonel Adair, the long arrear of rent, the hopelessness of his paying, &c., and I in return simply bade him do what was necessary to secure the ultimate discharge of the debt ; but at the same time I told him, that though it was necessary to prevent any one of my tenants from setting all the rest the bad example of never paying me, yet I would have no unnecessary severity."

" Well then, Williamson is a rascal, my dear sir," replied Lacy, " and I shall take the liberty of telling him so next time I see him. Instead of acting as you directed, he did use the most unnecessary severity, and not only did that, but declared that every blackguard act he committed, was by your immediate order, affecting all the time the greatest friendship for Colonel Adair and his family."

" If he has done that, I shall reprimand him," replied the peer ; " but remember, my hot son, that you have but the word of the person who is smarting, to prove all this. There is occasionally such a thing as another side to the question. Williamson may have found the measures he took absolutely necessary, and this Colonel Adair may have made his story good to you, by a concealment of some of the facts, and a distortion of others. We see the case every day with poor gentlemen who are very much wronged by their creditors."

" Colonel Adair, my dear sir, is a gentleman, a soldier, and a man of honour," replied Charles Lacy, " and it needs

but five minutes' conversation with him, to see that there is not a shadow of turning in his whole nature."

"I know nothing about him, Charles," replied Lord Methwyn coolly, "except that he never called upon me when I was in the country—never mingled with the other gentlemen in the county—except good Dr. Bellingham indeed—and therefore I took it for granted that he did not feel himself in that rank of society which would warrant his associating with those whom colonels in the army generally mix with. Is he a colonel of volunteers, or fencibles, or what?"

"He was long lieutenant colonel of the —— regiment," replied Lacy, "served in the Peninsula with high honour, was severely wounded at Albuera, and is first cousin to Lord Adair, a cousin of Mary's, and therefore a distant connexion of our own."

"Indeed! indeed!" exclaimed Lord Methwyn, raising his eyebrows; "that changes the whole complexion of the affair. I shall certainly reprimand Williamson severely, especially if he have presumed to say that such measures were taken according to orders of mine. I was precise in my directions, to see that the money was ultimately paid, but to use no unnecessary severity. Those were the very words. But I will call upon Colonel Adair! Where is he to be found?"

"Perhaps you had better not, my lord," replied Lacy—by no means feeling sure that the worthy colonel would extend a very courteous reception to one by whom he believed himself to have been treated ill; and anxious also to prevent any unnecessary collision which might obstruct his future views, either by producing anything like altercation between his father and Colonel Adair, or by showing the family and circumstances of her he ~~loved~~ to the fastidious eye of Lord Methwyn in a lower point of view than necessary.—"Perhaps you had better not, my lord," replied Lacy; "Colonel ~~Adair~~ is only in lodgings at present, seeing what can be done to extricate himself from the difficulties into which the failure of his agent has thrown him. I am not very sure that he was well pleased to see me, and under all circumstances, perhaps your visit might annoy him, if made before he is in a situation to receive you better."

" Well, well, Charles, explain to him what my conduct has really been," replied the peer. " Tell him what I wrote to Williamson, and assure him that the unpleasant measures pursued were solely of that worthy's own contrivance. So now, Charles," continued the earl, with one of his own meaning smiles, " you have a good excuse for going back to-morrow morning to see the little beauty that used to set fire to all the young farmers' hearts in the parish church. Nay, Charles, do not colour—I blame you not—but only take my advice, my dear boy, do not carry the matter too far, for the old gentleman might call you out, you know; and though in the days of Charles the Second, your godly namesake, it might be held a worthyfeat to seduce a pretty country girl, and shoot her father, if he had the impertinence to meddle, yet it will not do in the present day."

" I trust you are only joking, my dear sir," replied Lacy, with his colour really heightened. " I am not base enough to do either the one or the other; and I trust you know your son well enough to believe me."

" Pshaw, my dear Charles," rejoined his father, " I do not doubt you are a very moral young man; but a very moral young man is just the person to do what I have said—to fall in love with a pretty girl that he cannot marry; to go on with her from step to step till it is too late; to be called out by her father or brother; and then, provoked by insult, to fire, when he had no intention, killing his man, without the slightest wish to do so in the world. This is just the course of a very moral young man! If you had been a wild debauched young rascal, keeping half a dozen French mistresses, and falling in love with every opera dancer, I should have had no fear of you. At all events, my dear Charles, it behoves me, as your father, to give you a warning now and then."

To this very parental counsel and new code of morality Lacy did not reply, though what he heard mortified him not a little. The utter impossibility of his ever dreaming of marriage with Helen Adair, which seemed so firmly impressed upon his father's mind, was much more chilling to all his hopes and expectations than any direct opposition could have been. It was like a strong outwork to a fortified town, not only a tremendous barrier, but an indication of how impregnable the place itself would be. Nor was Lacy

a little mortified to hear his father speak so lightly of one, towards whom all the ardour of his love was mingled with that reverence which innocence and purity inspire in a virtuous mind :—had any one except his father, talked to him of seducing Helen Adair, he would have knocked him down ;—but besides all this, he was mortified to hear his parent speak so carelessly of matters which he thought of more deeply ; and although Lord Methwyn's own private life was chaste and correct enough, Lacy could not bear to think that the world often heard him talk thus lightly. The thought of his dead mother came across his mind in all her purity, and gentleness, and dignified beauty ; and he could not but feel, that it was a sort of profanation offered to her memory, for one who had been the husband of so fair and excellent a being, to talk idly to her son of debauchery and vice. However, it would have been a violation of one of her first precepts, to forget for a moment due respect towards his father, and passing over in silence that to which he could not reply, he merely answered coldly, that such a thing as seducing Miss Adair could never enter into his thoughts, or those of any one that knew her ; and adding, that he was going to join his cousin Mary at the opera, he took his leave, but little satisfied in any respect with the interview which had just passed.

CHAPTER V.

CHARLES LACY threw himself back in the carriage that was to bear him to the Opera-house, and although he was of that blessed disposition which may be called a hopeful temperament, yet dark and somewhat gloomy were his meditations. Since he had last seen Helen Adair a cloud had come over the sun without a cause, and yet not unreasonably. The contradiction is but seeming. When he had left Helen Adair and her father, the same obstacles to his purposes had existed that now existed, and he had known their existence just as well ; but in his conversation with his father he had his first regular encounter with any of those obstacles, and that had given him a more definite notion of the whole. The difficulties that lay in his path had been before like a distant view of mountains over which we have

to pass. We see them, we know their height, we calculate the length of time necessary to surmount them; but when we have reached their feet, and begin to climb, then it is that we feel tangibly how steep, and rugged, and wearisome they are. Well, Lacy threw himself back in the carriage in a desponding mood, determined to succeed, inasmuch as he felt the happiness of life depended upon success; but yet contemplating with an anxious eye the probability of a thousand obstacles delaying him, and grieving him, and resisting him in his advance. The cushions of the carriage, however, were soft, and the stuffing full and elastic, and by some association, I cannot tell what, Lacy began to think of his fair cousin, Lady Mary. Not however, as the suspicious reader imagines, with any vacillation of purpose. No ! He never thought of her at all as of a very pretty girl with laughing, blue eyes, and beautiful teeth, and a fine complexion, a pretty foot and ankle, and a small, fair hand.— He never thought of her at all as lively, witty, agreeable, as affectionate towards him as if he were her brother, and one that the proudest and most fastidious in the land might like to make a wife of. No ! Her idea was brought before him by another process : he first thought that no invention of human genious, no machine, contrivance, implement, or engine, that ever man constructed, from the time that he discovered how to graft trees down to the invention of the steam engine, was ever so well calculated to remove difficulties, to open ways, and devise means—in short to get one out of a scrape—as a woman ; and no sooner had he thought that, than he went on to think that if such were the case, no woman was ever better calculated for the task than his cousin, Lady Mary Denham. Then as he leaned back as I have said, and felt that the cushions were very soft, and the stuffing very elastic, he proceeded to reckon all the qualifications which were requisite, and which she possessed. In the first place she was exceedingly kind hearted, with a spice of romance mingling strangely enough with a sort of intuitive knowledge of the world and human nature, which had always hitherto kept her own heart quite free, while it had made it take a great interest in the hearts of other people. Then Lacy knew that, though she was of a light and laughing exterior, their was within many a deep thought and fine feeling, and thus, that though her gaiety acted as an *ægis* to her own breast, and had guarded her

own heart, it had not turned it into stone. He knew too that she loved him dearly, after a particular fashion, that fashion being not one grain too much, and not one grain too little for the express purpose which he had to answer. So much for the heart, and next for the understanding ! However gaily and lightly Lady Mary Denham might talk, however often she might call herself a professed flirt, and however careless she might be in regard to the number of times the public, and the public prints chose to marry her to men she would not have married for all the world, yet in regard to real proprieties of behaviour, no one was more exact without appearing to be so. Her friends, or rather her acquaintances, used to say, that Lady Mary could do any thing : but the reason was, that though she did many a thing that seemed strange, she never did any thing that even appeared to be doubtful. She was quick, clever, decided, an excellent planner of every thing, though no manœuverer in any, with a kind heart and accurate judgment, and none of that kind of selfishness which prevents us from undertaking any thing to benefit another, for fear of its being dangerous, or burdensome, or expensive to ourselves.

Such was Lady Mary Denham, and from this account of her qualities, it may well be conceived that she was the most comfortable cousin, friend, and confidant that Charles Lacy could have upon the present occasion. To this conclusion did he come himself, and when at length the carriage stopped opposite the old shapeless brown brick building, which in those days was called the Opera-house, he took his way direct to Lady Mary's box, which he found already tenanted by as many persons as an opera box can hold with any regard to the purposes for which opera boxes are ostensibly destined, namely, to see and hear what is going on upon the stage. There were three people in the box : the first in point of rank, beauty, and mind, was certainly Lady Mary herself; the second was that identical personage whom we have seen walking with Charles Lacy, when he first introduced him to the notice of our readers; and the third was a lady, who shall not only have due mention on account of her sex, but also because she is the type or model of a particular class. By the world in general, she was known as, or under the name of Viscountess Pontypool, but with Lady Mary Denham and all the numerous personages who loved or looked up to, or hung upon

the skirts of Lady Mary she was better known by the name of my Aunt Pontypool ; and indeed, as this sort of familiar appellation implied, she had lost her individuality in her attachment to her niece, and instead of shewing herself as a planet moving in her own orbit, she had contented herself with turning round Lady Mary ; and, like one of the satellites of Jupiter, she did not at all object to see two or three others revolving round the same star. She was herself the best-natured person in the world, and consequently, tried the temper of her poor niece every hour in the day, and proved how really sweet and kind it was : for, always anxious to do good to every body, to aid every body's schemes, and assist every body's purposes, the Lady Pontypool was almost sure to do the very things that nobody wanted, and to keep Lady Mary in constant endeavour to put right again the things that she had put wrong. This, Lady Mary did without ever, except upon very extraordinary occasions, venturing one word of remonstrance to her Aunt Pontypool, for besides having a great respect for her motives, Lady Mary had a very great tenderness for her feelings, and would not have wounded them for the world —in the first place, because she loved not to wound the feelings of any one—and in the second, because the peculiar circumstances of Lady Pontypool, rendered her particularly susceptible to harsh words.

The late and last Lord Pontypool had married the lady of whom we speak, for the sake of her fortune, having expended his own upon horses and various kinds of cattle, which are famous for removing money from pocket to pocket. At the time he made his proposal, she was about thirty-three years of age, and having acquired a habit of seeing things in a different point of view from that under which they appeared to other people, the more her friends represented to her, that his lordship was but a titled beggar with a good coat on, the more she determined to marry him, arguing, that if he had nothing to live on, and was in great distress, the more need of some one to give him means, and console him for his losses. Her ladyship's friends, however, took care to settle her whole fortune strictly upon herself, to which arrangement his lordship willingly agreed, knowing that at all events he would be placed in possession of a good income, and little doubting that in case of necessity, he could persuade the kind-hearted girl to throw the

deed into the fire. The case of necessity soon came, but he met with more opposition than he expected. No consideration for herself prevented Lady Pontypool from acquiescing at once in her husband's plan of giving up her settlement; but she had learned by this time that whatever he had, he would spend, and therefore for his sake, rather than her own, she not only refused, but maintained her resolution for four long years, through good treatment and bad, through threats and wheedling, till at length her worthy lord entered her room, pistol in hand, and telling her, that he had incurred a debt of honour which he could not pay, threatened to put an end to his own existence in her presence, if the settlement was not given up. Knowing well that there were but few lengths to which passion would not carry him, and, therefore, that such a menace, however ungentlemanly, and like a bully, might still be fulfilled, Lady Pontypool yielded. The settlement was given up, and his lordship in the flood-tide of his gratitude, promised reformation, economy, and abstinence. He so far kept his word, that he was three years in spending what he might by diligent application have consumed in three months. At the end of that time, having nothing left to spend, and Lady Pontypool nothing left to pillage, he applied to the ultima ratio of a pistol, and therewith settled all accounts in this world, whatever might be the balance against him in the next.

Thus was Lady Pontypool left utterly destitute of ought but friends. Of these however she had several who deserved the name, but amongst the best of these was her own sister, the mother of Lady Mary, Denham; who having married more wisely, remained more prosperous, though she had had the misfortune of seeing a husband whom she loved die early, and her daughter, then a child, left in the dangerous situation of an heiress. In her house Lady Pontypool found a home; a distant relation left her an annuity of a few hundreds a year, which gave her back a feeling of independence, and devoting herself to love and admire her niece Lady Mary, she passed many a year in great comfort, growing old without knowing it, and dwindling gradually into my Aunt Pontypool. Lady Mary knew her value, and loved her dearly;—as a child, laughed at and sometimes played upon the little weaknesses of a kind heart, but as she grew up to womanhood, and the first se-

vere sorrow she had ever known assailed her in the death of her mother, just three days after she became of age, the companionship and kindness of her aunt proved her greatest comfort and consolation. The worthy lady's utter want of worldly knowledge was sometimes annoying ; and many a little scrape had Lady Mary to disentangle, after her aunt had complicated it for all parties with the very best intentions ; but upon the whole, living with her niece, going every where with her, and scarcely ever being absent from her ten minutes, she was a very good chaperon, and enabled Lady Mary to give way to all that her own gaiety, or kindness of heart prompted, without any danger to herself, at least.

Now, my dear madam, you may look upon this as a very sad digression from the true and natural course of my tale, an interruption of the train of feelings excited in regard to Charles Lacy, and a waste of words upon a somewhat uninteresting old woman. But you are mistaken, as you in no degree see the small and secret springs by which the fate of all these parties were brought about, and had I not stopped just as Charles Lacy was stepping into the opera box to describe the character of my Aunt Pontypool, you would never have been able to comprehend why she acted in the manner which she did upon his entrance.

As soon as the door was opened, my Aunt Pontypool turned round to see who would present themselves, and as she saw Charles Lacy she blushed like a girl of sixteen ; looked first at Lady Mary, then at Major Kennedy, and then at Charles Lacy again, and then got up a speech in her own mind explanatory of how Major Kennedy happened to be admitted to sit close by Lady Mary in her box during the whole of the opera. The peculiar confirmation of her mind and character having been explained, it will be evident to any one that good Lady Pontypool had laid it down in her own mind as an inevitable necessity, that Lady Mary Denham was to marry Charles Lacy ; and in this arrangement of their destiny, her ladyship had been fully confirmed by hearing Lord Methwyn declare one day, that he could desire nothing better for his son. From this, as a starting post, she ran on to conceive that Lacy would naturally be hurt, and offended, and jealous, when he saw a very handsome man like Major Kennedy admitted to sit next Lady

Mary all night at the Opera, when no other gentleman had been invited to share the honour; and she instantly determined to smooth every thing down by one of those well-intentioned explanatory speeches which have occasionally set both families and kingdoms by the ears. Luckily, however she was stopped in full career by seeing Lacy shake Kennedy by the hand with as kind a look as the husbandman gives the harvest moon; and then speak to both herself and Lady Mary without the slightest signs of umbrage, jealousy or uneasiness. For a moment she fidgetted on her chair, not knowing whether to speak her speech or not; but as Lacy turned towards his cousin, and began to talk with her in a low tone, she thought she might as well let it alone; and bending on her part towards Major Kennedy, she accounted to him, in an under voice, for the confidential way in which the two cousins were speaking, by informing him, that it was very well understood by their mutual friends that they were soon to be united. Kennedy's brow grew dark, and his cheek turned red; but he only said, "Ha!" and looked towards the stage on which the dancers were putting themselves in the usual disgusting and indecent attitudes wherewith they edify the chaste dames of France and England. After he had thus gazed however for a minute or two, Kennedy—not particularly delighted with the peculiar class of distortions which he saw, and remembering that his conduct might seem a little rude to Lady Pontypool—turned towards her again, and was humming over the commencement of an uneasy conversation, when Lady Mary's reply to what Lacy had been saying caught his ear, and deprived his tongue of its own powers.

"A private audience, Charles," she said; "indeed, my dear cousin, this looks very serious! You do not mean to make me a formal proposal, surely. Never do such stupid things as that, Charles. Formal proposals have been exploded these ten years; and as for a gallant, whispered, equivocal declaration, that commits no party to any thing, and leaves them free to change their minds before the moon changes—there is no place like an opera box."

"No, no," replied Lacy, nearly aloud, "that will not do, Mary; what I have to say must be for your private ear, when you have time to give me serious attention."

"*Still no place better than the here and the now,*" an-

swered the gay girl, laughing. "My Aunt Pontypool will hear nothing that I beg her not; and Major Kennedy will turn away his head, I am sure. Will you not Major Kennedy, turn away your head while my cousin here makes me his declaration?"

"Most certainly," replied Kennedy, with an effort at gaiety almost as unsuccessful as one of the second-rate dancer's efforts at grace. "Most certainly, Lady Mary; or leave the box, if you command."

Lady Mary gazed at him gravely for a moment, and then the bright blood rushed up into her face, while turning away her head she put her handkerchief to her face for a single moment; not letting any one see that it was a smelling bottle of strong salts, wrapped in the folds of the handkerchief, that she applied under the temporary emotion that affected her. Kennedy saw that she was hurt, and anticipated the very words she might have used as a reply to his ill-judged answer, depriving him for ever of the enviable situation which he had that night enjoyed, and throwing down the hopes he had built up thereon. But the colour passed away from Mary Denham's cheek; the woman's heart triumphed, and she replied, "I am satisfied of your obedience, sir, but shall not put it so far to the proof. My cousin, who is never ill-humoured with any of my little caprices, will, I know, wait till to-morrow to make his declaration. To cheer him to-night, however," she added, resuming her gayer tone, "I will promise him, upon my honour, to accept him when he does make his declaration. So now, Major Kennedy, you may safely tell all the world who have any hearts to lose, not to throw them away upon me, for that Lady Mary Denham's heart is engaged."

Kennedy gazed at her earnestly for a moment, while his heart seemed to sink and rise alternately like a balance into which nearly equal weights had been suddenly thrown; but there was a kindly, though a laughing light in Lady Mary's beautiful eyes, which showed him that some gay equivoque lay in her speech, and, after a moment, the scale that bore his hopes rose gaily up again.

"Charles, I wish you would see for my carriage;" added Lady Mary, a moment after, "I hate to see these creatures grinning and knashing their teeth; I will look at their convulsions no longer." The carriage was soon found, and Charles Lacy, returning to the box, gave his arm, not to his

cousin, but to Lady Pontypool. Kennedy turned to Lady Mary ; and—looking down, but not looking cross—she placed her arm in his, and left the Opera.

CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES LACY had sent away his carriage, and as soon as his cousin and her aunt were safe in their vehicle, he turned with his companion to walk home. "So Lacy," said Major Kennedy, ere they had taken two steps, "Lady Pontypool tells me you are already engaged to Lady Mary."

"Lady Pontypool is mistaken," answered Lacy, drily. "Take my word for it, Kennedy, Mary and I know more about the matter than any one, so do not let my Aunt Pontypool lead you into any more scrapes, or you may throw away cards which well played would win you an important game."

"Well, I believe you are right :" answered his friend, assuming a lighter tone perhaps than his heart would have permitted had it been allowed to act—but how rarely is it in this life of ours that our feelings are suffered to strike the pitch-pipe whereby we modulate our voices ? The wooden Punch that makes the mob of children laugh at the street corners, is a creature of impulse when compared with the puppets of society—"I believe you are right," he said, "but you will acknowledge, Lacy, that you acted and spoke very much like two engaged people."

"No, indeed," answered Lacy, "I will make no such admission. We acted very much like two people who knew they never could or would be engaged to each other ; and remember, Kennedy, for I tell you before-hand, as we always have acted so towards each other, we always shall act so. As far as I am concerned, you must forget all jealousy ; and now, as your way home lies thither, fare you well."

"Good night," replied Kennedy, and turning up Pall Mall, he pursued his way meditating whether it could really be true that he whose sum of fortunes did not amount to a thousand a year, and his commission, stood fair to win the hand of one so lovely, when that hand was shackled with

the golden fetters of high birth and princely wealth. He thought of it over and over again as he walked along ; but still he could not put sufficient faith in his stars, to make that declaration which would draw on the descision of his fate. His meditation continued till he reached his own door, and then it ended with this very extraordinary aspiration, "I wish to God she had not a farthing ! I would ask her to-morrow !"

In the mean while Lacy walked on, and was about to pass through the string of carriages which lined Charles street, and the Haymarket, when he was assailed by the wonted cry of—"A link, your honour!" "No!" answered Lacy ; "Oh a link, my Lord ;" rejoined the boy. Lacy reiterated his "No!" "Oh, do your excellency!" shouted the lad. "Can I get your Grace's carriage ? It is but to earn a trifle, my Prince," he continued, running on before Lacy's footsteps—"Do give me a trifle, your Royal Highness—pray do, my king of a gentleman ! My emperor, pray do !" and then, seeing that all the titles he showered upon the stranger had no effect, he dropped the lighted end of his link with a despairing sort of fall, adding in a sad tone, "Ah, if your honour knew what it was to have a sick mother and nothing to give her, I think you would."

Had the boy been really able to bestow all the dignities of which he had been so lavish in words, he would have found no means of calling Lacy's attention half so forcibly as that which he employed at last. There was something in his tone and his manner that was true. It was not the common whine of the beggar, nor the cant of the hypocrite, but it was the last appeal of real distress, when all other and usual means had failed. Lacy stopped, and looked at the boy, who with his ragged hat in one hand, and his drooping link in the other, had paused at the crossing, and was gazing up in his face, with an expression of some slight wonder at the sudden stop which that gentleman had made, but with tears in his eyes at the same time, if the words he had used to touch the heart of another, had reawakened overpowering feelings in his own.

"And is your mother really sick, my poor boy? demanded Lacy, gazing at him attentively. "I am not a man to be cheated, for I investigate all these things myself : so tell me the truth at once, and it may be better for you."

"It is true as I am alive, your honour!" replied the boy ;

and seeing that Lacy still gazed at him with a look of that doubt which the continual deceptions of a deceitful race, calls up on the features of a man of the world, when any common-place, tale of distress is poured into his ear, he added, "If your honour likes, you can go with me this very minute, and see with your own eyes. If you do not find my poor mother sick, in bed, and not a bit in the house to give her, break my head for me."

"Well," replied Lacy, "shew me the way, my man, for I will go; and if I find your mother really in the state you mention, I may do something more for you, than give you a sixpence."

It is probable that there were at that moment in the vast accumulation of little brick buildings called London, at least the number of six young men who would have acted just as Lacy did, but were we to calculate all the chances for and against any one of these six being at the Opera that night, and meeting with that link boy, we should find them to be infinite. The boy therefore stared at his determination, wondering, as every one has a right to do, at an event which never occurred to him before; but not at all shaken in his purpose. True it is he had offered to conduct Lacy to the dwelling of his mother, without the slightest expectation of his agreeing to the proposal, and solely with a view to catch the impending sixpence; but still when that gentleman took him at his word, he was not at all dismayed, from the simple fact that his mother *was* sick in bed, without food, and with very little raiment. There was a momentary hesitation however in his manner, arising from surprise, which again made Lacy doubt, and adding, "Come, my boy, shew me the way," he followed him across the Haymarket, and down the Strand.

In those days, some of the most disreputable streets in London ran along between the Strand and King Street, Covent Garden, in a line parallel to both; and between these disreputable streets and the Strand itself, passed a number of courts and alleys, as dangerous and dishonest, as the others were debauched and licentious. Nests of pickpockets and low swindlers, and often the resort of the highwayman, the footpad, and the house-breaker, these alleys contained within themselves a life of mystery and darkness, into which the eye of day never penetrated. In running over Linnæus's System of Nature, a book to which

we have already referred, we find that no class or order of animals is without a connecting link between itself and others. The bat joins the quadruped and the bird, the seal connects the fish with the beast, and even animal and vegetable, by fine degrees, merge into each other. So was it also in general with the houses of these alleys, and with their inhabitants. The darker and more intricate recesses hid the darker criminals; then came the pickpockets and swindlers, nearer to the day; next but one to the mouth was usually a receiver of stolen goods, and at the corner, where the court opened on the Strand, was the pawnbroker's shop, with a swing door to each side—patrons and propagators of misery and vice, at once offering relief and destruction to the wretched.

To the mouth of one of these courts, then, the boy conducted Lacy, after having extinguished his link against a lamp-post, a proceeding which the young officer did not object to, having but little desire to be conducted to the dwelling of poverty with a torch before him. When the boy stopped, however, before the mouth of the court, with the gin shop and the pawnbroker on either side, Lacy looked up the dark and yawning gulf, and could have wished for a light. The gin shop, it is true, was not closed; for in those days, neither the scent of the morning air, nor the crowing of the cock, which, in the time of Hamlet, warned spirits to give way, were allowed to have any effect upon gin and cordial compounds: but on the contrary, the sound of eleven o'clock, struck slowly on the bell, was the warning voice which banished all such spirits from the streets of London, and that hour had not yet arrived. Nevertheless, though the gin shop was open, yet dim and smoky was the glare which proceeded from the yawning door and drunken-looking windows of the lowly house of evil spirits; for as yet they had not taken up their abode in palaces—as yet, no magnificent lamps of gas flamed before the mahogany doors of those temples of Seevah*—as yet, the genius of modern liberality had not proceeded so far as to facilitate every means of drunkenness and vice for the sake of the revenue—as yet, legislators had not found out, that taxes upon that cheap destruction which demoralizes the mind, and enfeebles the body of the subject, would, by the

* The Destroyer.

increased consumption of the poison, benefit the state—as yet, the finest houses in London had not been licensed as troughs for ardent spirits, nor had government provided the peasantry, by means of beer houses, with an inducement and an opportunity to quit their families, neglect their work, spend their money, and degrade their bodies and their minds.

Dim and smoky then was the glare which proceeded from the poor gin shop of those days, and throwing its misty light only across the mouth of the court, it served merely to render the interior more dark and gloomy to the eyes of Lacy. He was not a man, however, to pause for dangers when he had determined upon any course of action, even if he knew all the perils beforehand. On this occasion, indeed, his long absence had rendered him but little conversant with all the wiles and the villainy of the great capital; though as a man of the world, he knew that a dark alley at eleven o'clock at night, was not a desirable promenade for a man of fashion with a gold watch and seals at his side. The boy, too, had made a sort of irresolute halt ere he entered the court, as if not well knowing whether to conduct his companion into its dark and dangerous recesses or not; but Lacy's calm "Go on, my good boy!" decided the matter, and they were soon plunged in the abyss. For the first hundred yards all was quiet; but at the end of that space, Lacy received an intimation of the sort of society upon whose privacy he was intruding, by hearing as he passed a window,—the dirt on which rendered all blinds needless—a cracked and reedy female voice addressing some tender speeches to a male companion, the regular construction of which was so interrupted by expletives, neither very decent nor very reverent, that none but the initiated could have discovered what was meant. Still he went on, however, and as it luckily so happened, that the greater part of the fair and brave who tenanted that portion of the earth were out upon what they themselves termed, *the lay*, he was suffered to proceed uninterrupted, till the boy, having taken a turn to the right, stopped at the door of a dark-looking house in a paved court.

"Come in, your honour? come in!" cried the youth.
"Lord, 'a mercy! I was afraid we should have met some one, and then you might not have got on so safe!"

Although this speech fully opened Lacy's eyes to the

dangers of the pass which he had had the hardihood to force, yet, being one of those men who remark and examine every particular with a rapidity of perception and combination, only to be acquired by frequenting scenes of danger and difficulty, he at once deduced, both from the boy's words and manner, that no evil was intended towards him by his young conductor. The boy had pushed open the swing door of the house, and Lacy entering without hesitation, it instantly closed behind him, leaving the whole passage in darkness.

"This way, sir," said the lad; and following his voice, the young officer walked on till his foot hit against the lowest step of the stairs, the boy warning him at the same time to take care how he went, as some of the planks were rickety.

A door upon the first floor was open, and Lacy could see an old woman sitting over a fire, muttering some indistinct words, apparently to herself. She seemed to be deaf, however, for the footsteps on the stairs did not attract her attention, and Lacy and his young guide passed on. At the second floor they halted, and the boy opened a door, from which immediately streamed forth the light. That light however was not at all sufficiently brilliant to dazzle Lacy's eyes, although they had been so long accustomed to darkness; and by the faint rays of a rushlight, which stood in a green glass bottle for a candlestick, he could see a decent room enough, with a door half open on his left hand, leading into a back room; a bed on the floor in one corner, a table, two whole chairs and a broken one, and a small fireplace, with a cupboard on either side. But one person was in the room, and that was a girl of about seventeen, exceedingly beautiful, and though coarsely dressed, bearing about her no touch or trait of that class of women by whom there could be no doubt she was surrounded in that place. She was sitting by the rushlight, working eagerly to accomplish the mystery of making a man's shirt; but the moment Lacy entered she dropped her work, and looked first at his conductor, then at himself, while her pale cheek turned still paler, and her large dark eyes expanded with a look of apprehension, if not despair. Not knowing what she feared, Lacy advanced and said a few kindly words, while the boy gabbled something quickly in explanation; but ere she

could answer, or well comprehend either, a voice, feeble but distinct, was heard calling from the next room.

"Oh Bill, Bill!" it cried, "I hope you have not been wicked enough to bring any one to your sister, as that vile woman wanted you! I would rather starve and die! Louisa, I would rather die—and I will die—for never a morsel shall pass my mouth purchased by your guilt, my child. Oh, sir, have pity upon us! Bill, how could you do such a thing?"

"I have done nothing, mother," replied the boy, going towards the door; "I have done nothing but brought the gentleman here to see you, because he seemed sorry when I told him how badly you were off."

It wanted fewer combinations than are required for the relief of a besieged city to enable Lacy's mind to gather the chief facts regarding the family by whom he was surrounded, and he accordingly did gather them in a moment. So without more ado, he walked on into the other room, taking the rushlight with him. Before him, opposite to the door, was a bed, without curtains, whereon lay the form of what had once been a very handsome woman, but now pale, worn, haggard, and to all appearance dying; it was only in the large dark eyes, and fine line of features, that any thing like beauty was to be discerned. Advancing direct to her bed side, Lacy applied himself at once to speak comfort.

"Do not be alarmed, my good lady" he said; "I came here with no evil intention, I can assure you. Your son here told me of your situation. To say the truth, I did not quite believe him; but as he offered to show me where you lived, I followed him, in order to judge with my own eyes, and if I found his story true, to do what little I can to help you."

"Oh thank you, thank you, sir," replied the sick woman; "but Bill should not have brought you here. It is a bad place, sir; and how will you get out? I am very much obliged to you, sir; but I wish you had not come."

Lacy smiled, for the very wish the poor woman expressed that he had not come, made him glad that he had; for it showed him that virtue, and honour, and good feeling can even dwell unsullied in such abodes as that wherein he stood; and to do service to one who thought of his safety before the relief he could afford her, was, in his mind, well

worth any danger that our clay can suffer. He spoke to her, then in the manner which such feelings prompted, and being by no means convinced that he could carry any portion of the contents of his purse to the end of the alley, he took care that one half thereof at least should remain where it could really benefit. Although the sum was not very large, the sight of the two or three gold pieces which Lacy laid down beside her, brought first a bright light and then some brighter drops into the poor woman's eyes. For an instant, the many emotions to which such relief gave rise, struggled against each other for precedence; but in a moment after they fell into their right order. She clasped her hands together, and with her eyes raised up, murmured a few words of thanks and prayer. Then the mother made itself heard, and turning to her son, she cried, "Oh Bill, run out and see if you can get something for your sister and yourself to eat before the shops are shut;" and then turning to Lacy, she poured forth the torrent of her gratitude in words that called the tears into his eyes.

Lacy looked away, and beckoning to the boy, who having snatched up a guinea, was running towards the door with all the eagerness of hunger, he bade him go to the first surgeon he could find, and bid him come to see his mother directly. "Tell him," added Lacy, fearing that selfish considerations might make the medical man neglect the call if unseconded by some more potent motive than the mere voice of a ragged beggar boy, "Tell him that the Honourable Captain Lacy is here, and will wait till he comes. There, give him that card."

The boy flew to obey; and the poor woman, renewing her thanks, was beginning, in even a feebler tone than before, to explain how and why she was found in such a situation, but Lacy interrupted her, bidding her remain quiet till the surgeon came.

"I shall wait for him in the next room," said Lacy; "and in the meantime your daughter here shall tell me all about you."

Notwithstanding all he had done, the anxious feelings of the mother would rise up with a momentary doubt, and she cast one apprehensive glance upon her child as the girl followed the young officer from the room. Lacy's eye caught the expression of her countenance, and he understood it, but was not at all offended. Leaving the door wide open

therefore, he sat down before the fire, where the mother's eye could rest upon him, saying, "Now, my good girl, you can go on with your work, and at the same time tell me who you are, and all the rest."

With a timid and somewhat embarrassed, but not an ungraceful manner, the girl proceeded to tell the little tale connected with her mother's situation, but as her inexperience in story-telling rendered it rather long and desultory, it may as well be abridged here. Her mother had two brothers, she said, of the name of Green, one of whom was in the army in Spain, but of him they had not heard for a long time—four or five years. The other lived in London, and it was in his house they now were. The father of the three had been a reputable farmer in the country, somewhat famous for his skill in, and love of country sports; and in this respect he had been followed by worthy representatives in his two sons, who in boxing, wrestling, cricket, and quoits were unrivalled. At an early age the daughter had married a respectable corn dealer in London; but shortly after her marriage the affairs of her father began to go wrong. Her husband did his best to afford relief, but in vain. Loss succeeded loss, and at length the old man was obliged to quit his farm, and died within a few weeks of a broken heart in a neighbouring cottage. There seemed no choice for the sons but to become labourers in the county where they had held a better station, or to seek their fortunes elsewhere; and their resolution was not long in being taken. The youngest betook himself to London, and the eldest, after struggling on in different capacities for some time, enlisted in a cavalry regiment, went to India and then to Spain, and when last his family heard of him was serving with some distinction.

"Green!" said Lacy, as the girl came to this part of her tale, "Green! I remember something of the name—oh yes! there was a Serjeant Green of the —— dragoons, who distinguished himself particularly at Fuentes d'Onoro, and was publicly noticed by Lord Wellington. He got a step, I remember very well. But tell me—" Just as he was speaking, however, an extraordinary scraping and growling in one of the cupboards by the fireside caught his attention, and he inquired what the noise proceeded from.

"Oh it is nothing but my uncle's bull dogs, *sir*," replied the girl. "Poor beasts! we have had no meat to

give them to eat all day—though they were fed yesterday with what my poor mother ought to have had herself. And the game cocks have had nothing either ;” and as she spoke she opened one of the cupboards from which the sound proceeded. Behind the door were the bars of a sort of a cage, against which were pressed the eager noses of two fine dogs, the miserable thinness and glaring eyes of which spoke plainly that they had shared in the poverty of the house.

“ But if your uncle has neither food for himself or his family, why does he not sell these poor beasts who are starving likewise ?” was Lacy’s immediate question.

“ Oh ! my uncle is not able to stir, sir,” replied the girl. “ He lost his last battle at Moulsey, and is lying at the hospital so badly beaten that he does not know any one, and the surgeons say he will die.”

A light broke in upon Lacy as she spoke. “ Oh then your uncle is a prize fighter,” he exclaimed ; “ is that the case, my good girl ?”

“ Yes, sir,” answered the girl, “ and he has been away these ten days ; but my mother dared not sell the dogs or the cocks either, for though he has been kind to us ever since my poor father failed and died in consequence of the money he lent my grandfather, yet my uncle William is so particular about his dogs, that he often said he would not take five hundred pounds for them. So that all we have had to live upon for the last week, is what my brother has been able to get with his link, which a few gentleman gave him : for though I have done three shirts and carried them home, Mrs. Hodgkins will not pay for them till I have done the whole.”

“ That is very cruel of her, I think !” replied Lacy.

“ Oh but I dare not tell her so !” answered the girl, “ for fear she should not give me any more work ; and besides you know, sir, this is a bad place, and she thinks that she might lose the linen if she gave more without having some money of ours in her hands. I am sure I ought to think it very kind of her to trust me with the first she gave me, without making me give a deposit.”

Lacy was not a man to weaken the foundation of one good feeling, though perhaps that foundation was not a good one and though he thought that the degree of liberality which the worthy Mrs. Hodgkins had shown, did not call for any very great gratitude, he refrained from expressing such an

opinion, but sat for a moment with his eyes fixed on the fire, musing upon the many miseries that swarm around us in a great capital while we are rolling in wealth and luxury, and praising God that we are not "extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." While he thus paused and meditated, the door of the house was heard to shut to with a bang, and then came the sound of steps ascending the staircase. "The Surgeon!" thought Lacy at first, but then there was a sort of clang and clatter, not exactly like that of a man walking in fetters, but certainly as if there were a good deal more iron scattered about the person of the new comer than usually decorates that of a man of peace. The girl looked anxiously towards the door, and Lacy could see the sick woman in the next room raise herself in bed to listen. In the meanwhile the steps mounted slowly to the floor below, and then a deep, powerful voice was heard demanding in a courteous tone, "Pray, ma'am, can you tell me whereabouts in this dark house are the lodgings of Mr. William Green, and his sister, Mistress Milsome?"

"And what the devil do you want with them, you flash covee, with your long sword, saddle, bridle, whack row di dow?" rejoined a cracked female voice, which Lacy justly concluded to proceed from the larynx of the old woman he had seen snoring over the fire below.

"What I want with them I will tell them when I find them," replied the other, "so be so good as to let me know if they are here, or on the floor above?"

"Ay! now I'll bet you a quartern," said the old woman's voice, "that you've come arter the pretty girl—but I can tell you she's engaged! There's a gemman with her up stairs. He crept up with Bill half an hour ago, and then they sent Bill away. They thought I didn't see, but I sees with one eye shut and t'other eye open any how:—Come, come," she added in a louder tone, "don't you go up—didn't I tell you she's got company."

"Hold off your hands, you old baggage!" replied the other voice. "If you're a gentleman as I take you to be—which you are not by the way, being a woman and a blackguard—behave as sich, and act according-ly!" and having concluded this curious adjuration, laying a great stress upon the last syllable, the speaker was heard making his way up the stairs as fast as the darkness would let him. Directly opposite to him was the door by which Lacy had

entered, and to it therefore the visitor's hand was immediately applied, feeling for the handle of the lock. As soon as he had found it, the door was unceremoniously thrown open, and a figure entered on which we must pause.

It was that of a man about six feet three inches in height, with a countenance which was rather handsome than otherwise, bearing a grave and determined, but somewhat self-important expression; and a frame which added to the ease of great muscular strength, the erect, and well balanced air of long military training. His apparel was that of an adjutant of some dragoon regiment, in the half dress of that period; a close-fitting blue coat, with brass plates upon the shoulders, a red sash round his waist, and his long sword by his side. His hands were also well covered with thick buckskin gloves, as white as pipe clay could make them, and at the wrist of his dexter hung a small cane by a thin leathern thong. His eye was very bright, and his cheek, which had a deep gash all the way from the ear to the corner of the mouth, seemed to have been rendered redder than natural, probably by his skirmish with the old woman below. At the same time he was evidently heated in temper, and as he entered he gave a glance at the girl, another at Lacy who calmly kept his seat before the fire; and then advancing gave a flourish with his hand worthy of Corporal Trim. "I beg leave, sir, to enquire," he said, addressing Lacy, "I beg leave, sir, to enquire, what you are doing here with my niece? If you are a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such and act accordingly! I beg to know what you are doing here with my niece, that is all!"

"Nothing!" was Lacy's calm reply, gazing at him from head to foot as a specimen of a class of viviparous bipeds with which he was well acquainted.

"Nothing, sir?—nothing?" rejoined the soldier, looking at him steadfastly; and then somewhat puzzled by Lacy's coolness, he took refuge once more in his favourite speech, "If you are a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such, and act accordingly."

"So, my dear sir, I always endeavour to do," replied Lacy, "and so am I now doing. But you had better attend to your niece who is pulling your arm, or listen to your sister who is speaking to you from the next room, and you will probably find cause not to stare at me so furiously any longer."

Louisa Milsome, as Lacy had said, was by this time holding her uncle by the arm, deluging the sleeve of his coat with tears, half joyful at the return of a relation, whose fate had been for many years uncertain, and from whom she now hoped protection and support, and half frightened at the angry tone in which he was addressing the only person who for many a long month had shewn anything like generous and disinterested kindness to herself, and sick mother. At the same time the poor woman was raising her feeble voice, in order to stay her brother's ill-directed wrath from falling upon Lacy ; but in his first misapprehension the soldier had neither attended to the one, nor the other, till the young officer's reply directed his notice to both. Then throwing his arm round the slight figure of his niece, and pressing her to him with the tenderness of a parent, he said as he gazed sometimes upon her, sometimes upon her mother, and addressing his speech partly to both, "I am sure, Lousia—I do not think you would turn out a bad girl, with such a father and such a mother as you had ; and I am sure, Mary, very sure you would not let her—but what does such a gentleman as that do here ?—By my soul and life, if I do not believe it is Captain Lacy, with whom I had the honour to serve at Fuentes d'Onoro, and at Vittoria, and the Pyrenees, and at Orthez, and before Toulouse—'Pon my soul, sir, I do not think you would wrong a poor girl either—but then, why should you come here ?—If you be a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such and act accordingly."

"And so he does, Charles, and so he does," cried his sister from the other room ; "he has been our benefactor this very night. He has given us bread when we are all starving, and has sent for a surgeon to attend me, for which God bless him ! though I doubt that it will be any good."

"Sir, I beg your pardon !" cried the soldier, dropping his right hand which had remained partly raised while he continued in any doubt, and looking Lacy full in the face, "sir, I beg your pardon ; I hope I have not offended, sir, but I cannot stand disgrace. I am now an officer in his majesty's service—rose from the ranks—but still, sir, come of honest people, and I cannot stand disgrace. So I hope I have not offended ; but I was under a mistake."

"You have not offended me in the least, Mr. Green," replied Lacy. "I heard what passed below, so that I know

your mistake was natural ; but depend upon it I should feel, as much ashamed of bringing disgrace upon your family as you would in suffering it. But now go and speak to your sister. I shall wait till I hear the surgeon's opinion, and then leave you alone together, for doubtless you have much to tell, and much to hear also."

"Nothing to tell, sir, that I care to tell before all the world," answered the soldier; "but as you are so good as to excuse me, I will go and speak to poor Mary for a minute or two." This he accordingly did, and apparently heard from her more particularly the kindness which Lacy had shewn towards herself and family, for in a moment he returned, and in his own person thanked the young officer for his benevolence towards his sister in her distress. "I always knew you were a gentleman, sir," he added, varying a little his favourite phrase, "I always knew you were a gentleman, and would act accordingly : but you see, sir, though I have been back in England some weeks now, it was only yesterday I could hear any thing of my family, and then surely I heard plenty of bad news, that my brother was lying like to die at the hospital, and that my sister and her children were bad off enough. So I went to see my brother to-day, hoping he could tell me where to find Mary ; but you, sir, who have been accustomed to see men cut down with the sabre, or riddled with shot holes, or pounded with cannon balls, or doubled up with the bayonet, you can form no notion of how a man may be beaten with two fists. There he was lying, sir, quite insensible, poor fellow ! and could not answer me a word, though I spoke loud enough to make the deaf hear. However I sat with him all day, till about an hour or two ago he began to change, and his very first talk, when he recovered his senses, was about Mary here. So as the surgeon here told me he was better, and that of all things quiet was good for him, I came away here."

Now although Charles Lacy, so long as the object of assisting a fellow creature was before him, forgot all the little *et ceteras* of personal convenience ; yet when that object was removed, no man had less of a predilection for second stories in a back alley. He had none of that rhodomontade of benevolence about him, which leads exceedingly well disposed persons to stay by the bedside of the poor and sick so long, that the poor and sick wish them any where else on the earth, or under the earth ; and the moment he

had done as much as his good sense told him was all he could do to serve a needy and deserving object, that moment he was ready and willing to return to the habits and occupations of his rank in life. Having listened thus to the explanatory speech of Green, he merely waited further till the surgeon, having arrived, had considered the poor woman's case; and then leaving his card with the worthy soldier with an invitation to call upon him next day, he took advantage of the surgeon's departure, to leave the alley in company with one who knew its intricacies better than himself, and once more bent his steps to Portman Square.

And now the judicious reader, my dear madam, will sagely remark that if I have written all this chapter, and told an insignificant circumstance, and spoken of very vulgar people, solely for the purpose of illustrating the character of Charles Lacy, I have paid a bad compliment to the public wit, judgment, and imagination; but you and I, who know that this very circumstance, and these very people here commented on, worked out the fate of others much higher in station than themselves, will laugh at all objections, and go forward on our way.

CHAPTER VII.

Let others sing, as doubtless sing they will,
The morning breaking over field and grove;
The dawning glories of the eastern hill,
The voice of nature breaking into love.

Be mine to sing the scene of frolic day,
A glad boy broke from Father Night's dull frown;
Where through dim streets he pours a yellow ray,
And dawns with Cuyp-like glow on London town.

NEVERTHELESS, I grant that morning is very beautiful in the country, especially when in the full fierceness of the summer's hottest days—those days when dogs go mad, and dogstars rage, and dogs in mangers stiffer curl their tails—especially then, when she comes wrapped in a gauzy dressing gown of mist so faint and thin, that it seems but the exhalation of the sacrifice which earth offers up to heaven for the renewed boon of light; when the rosy clouds of the

sky can be seen through the gentle rising of the dew, and the purple mountains touched with golden fire, rise grand and yet soft in the magnifying indistinctness of the early air—when the liquid diamonds, more bright than ever shone crown or coronet, gem the butter cup and daisy, or hang their lustre on the meadow queen's fair brow—when there is a perfume and a fresh softness in every breath of the young wind, and when all the sounds harmonize with all the sights, and make up one lovely and enchanting whole.

Nevertheless, although no dew, except such as is bestowed by the rolling efforts of a water-cart, softens the streets of the great metropolis—though the perfumes that load its air, have their rise in coal-smoke, and many a manufactory—and, though neither mountains—if we except Snow and Ludgate hills, and the dome of St. Paul's; nor fields—with a reservation in favour of those ycleped Lincoln,—meet the eye, still the breaking of a fine spring morning is not without its beauty in London.

Take for instance the long perspective of some of the streets near the parks, with the houses falling into many a quaint and irregular form, and diminishing as they go off from the eye, and then put the new-risen sun pouring a tide of softened splendour down the long vista while deep broad shadows here and there mark where any building projects beyond the rest. Then what a tide of associations rise when we look upon those unawakened dwellings, and think of all the host of many passions and feelings that there lie slumbering ;—and what is loveliness but a sight which calls up fine associations ? There in those dim and voiceless dwellings, with closed windows and door shut upon the world, lie beauty and ugliness, health, strength, sickness, deformity, wit, folly, madness, death. There side by side, stand the abodes of joy and mourning : there the new-born infant, with shrill cry, wails its first entrance into a world of care : and there the worn-out grandsire, with a parting groan, lays down at length the heavy load of life. There, too, calm innocence reposes in soft sleep ; and there, delirious crime tosses on the burning bed of mental torture : there, happy love lies blest ; and there, sad disappointment stretches forth the weary limbs, and courts in vain the long-refused repose. Aye even there ! just as the sunshine and the shade gilds or darkens each several doorway !—Yet, let us read our moral in the simile. The same bright sun

shines over all : it is man's works that cast the shadow. But still the sight is beautiful, and full of thrilling interest speaking to our own hearts ; and then the empty streets, the vacant pavements,—as yet guiltless of all the clang and clatter of the day,—winding a way marked by the long and slender lamp posts and the light iron work of the railings ; —who can see them thus untenanted, without thinking of the time when we, and ours, and all the busy creatures that buzz around us in the risen day, shall have left those streets as lonely as we behold them now.—

We think not—why should we think ?—of the others that may rise up to fill our places. We live in our own generation, and the unborn future is to us as nothing. We shall die, and sleeping the long sleep, shall, with all that now wander on with us through existence, leave our places vacant as an empty street. Come who may, to tread that pavement afterwards, they are to us but shadows.

Yet see, along the path comes down the labourer, going forth to his work with health and cheerfulness upon his cheek, bought by honest labour and early industry ; and then the milk-maid trips on with her clanging pails ; and then many a school-bound urchin with round unwilling shoulders, creeps out and marks the wakening of the world around. At last the church clocks strike, high up in the morning air, heard then only distinct and clear, unmixed with the clamour of the day.

Charles Lacy was up betimes, and towards six o'clock he had posted himself at his window, and watched the early sights of a London morning, meditating in a rambling and desultory way on such matters as those written above ; but the striking of the clock called him from his reverie, and dressing himself as speedily as the circumstances—and the want of hot water in a London house at six in the morning—would admit, he issued forth into the outward air, which even in London, smacked of all the fresh invigorating coolness of the morning-tide. The maid whose peculiar function it was to heat the water, for which he had rung seven times, cursed him by all her gods, and wished him at the devil ; and his own particular valet thought unto himself, “There's something in the wind to take him out so early,” but like a discreet valet he uttered not a word. Away then Lacy went with the morning shining fair upon him, and the few clouds which remained from the last night's rain, flitting

across his path from time to time, till he came to a street called Argyle Street, where he sought out a house upon the left hand side, and thereunto applied the knocker. The door was opened by a neatly dressed maid, who straightway ushered him into a small back parlour, where, at a table covered with a scanty but a clean table cloth, sat the representative of a class which no longer exists. He was a little man with a pig-tail, which would be quite sufficient to distinguish him from all other animals; but in ten lines, we must and can give some other characteristic differences which may be requisite to a right comprehension of his state of being. His stomach, whereby I mean not that internal organ into which the œsophagus conveys those aliments which torture us so terribly in their digestion, but the whole of that abdominal sac or cyst beginning at the sternum, and terminating where the legs begin. His stomach, then, was in size and shape very much like the back of an old fashioned lute, not very protuberant, and yet large enough to throw him somewhat on his heels when he did walk. Over this rotundity, he wore a white waistcoat, which, by its shape, at once exemplified his ideas of impartiality and etymology, for he reasoned upon the matter thus:—"A waistcoat means a coat to cover one's whole waist, and very right it should; for why should men, like the puppies of the present day, give a double covering to one part of their stomach, and leave the rest without?" In consequence of this argument, his waistcoat, which begun at his throat, ended not till his legs (separate and distinct as legs) appeared from beneath the ample pockets. The other side of his person, which he wore usually behind him, without making any vain effort, like the famous Venus, to see what nature never intended him to contemplate, was covered with a snuff-brown coat, cut in the fashion of Quaker's; and over the standing collar hung the aforesaid pigtail, which, as if to justify its descent from the animal unto whom it is indebted for its designation, pertinaciously turned to one side, notwithstanding the continual twitches of its owner, who endeavoured from time to time to drag it to the *juste milieu*. Striped silk stockings proceeding from drab breeches, and high shoes with buckles, made up the rest; and thus equipped, Mr. Owen Snipes, whose name long figured on the law list as a most respectable attorney, sat before Captain Lacy, eating his breakfast at the precise hour of

seven, from which he had never varied once in fifty years. As Lacy entered, and even while he was bidding him welcome, the old gentleman eyed the small coffee pot, and the single muffin, which formed his invariable commencement of the day's work ; and then beckoning to Rebecca his maid, he enjoined her straightway to double the supply. On this, however. Lacy put a negative, and taking the two fingers of the right hand which the old gentleman extended to him, he sat down beside him, and as soon as the door was closed, proceeded to explain what brought him there at that early and unseasonable hour. These explanations were somewhat long, and as the learned reader, unaccustomed to read any thing more tedious and difficult of comprehension, than the lays of the Nibelungen, the history of Gargantua, or the speech of the senior alderman at a corporation dinner, is already anxious (God help him !) to get on with the story, we will, my dear madam, cut the said explanations short, and begin with the end, which in general, in all matters of history, is the very best beginning.

“ But, my dear sir,” rejoined Mr. Snipes to Lacy's last sentences, “ you know very well that I do not like to lend money at all, as I term it ; and if you like to lend it to this gentleman, why do you not do it yourself ? I have three thousand pounds of yours in my hands at this very moment, as I term it.”

“ But I have already explained to you,” replied Lacy, “ that being somewhat angry in regard to my father's proceedings, he would by no means accept of the money from myself. If you then will be kind enough to advance the money, I will be security for the payment ; but even that fact of my being security I must have concealed, or I am afraid we should hurt his feelings.”

“ Very extraordinary feelings indeed, as I term it !” replied the man of law ;—“ very extraordinary feelings indeed ; but I suppose I must advance the money, as you are inclined to be the security ; but remember, my dear sir, you are acting without my advice as a lawyer in this business, indeed against it, for, as I term it, if you were to ask my advice—”

“ But I do not ask it, my good friend,” replied Lacy : “ for the sole sake of keeping your conscience clear in case I should be a loser, I ask no counsel or opinion on the subject. So get the bond or whatever security you desire

drawn up, and I will sign, seal, and deliver as soon as you like."

"Patience, patience, my dear sir," replied Mr. Owen Snipes, "the instrument, as we term it, cannot be drawn up so soon. When do you wish me to stand and deliver? as our worthy gentlemen of the road term it. Will not to-morrow do?"

Lacy however explained to him that he had already promised the money by twelve o'clock; and having arranged with Mr. Snipes the exact sort of common acknowledgement that was to be taken of Colonel Adair, whereunto he, Lacy, was afterwards to add his own personal security, he agreed to meet the worthy lawyer at the old soldier's lodgings at noon; and so bidding him farewell departed.

Now there is nothing in the world which a person in Lacy's situation should so carefully avoid as the very thing he is most likely to do, that is, to rise early in the morning. No one is so matutinal in his habits as Love, Prince of Gods and men; but for a man in love, and an eager and impatient man too, to suffer himself to be so bamboozled by the blind god as to get out of bed one moment before the usual time, is something worse than folly. If the hours that one is away from her seem tedious and tiresome at the best, what bad policy is it to add three or four more to the list, hours too for which one has no employment in the regular routine of the day's tiresomeness! Lie in bed, ye lovers! lie in bed! let the clock strike eleven before you draw on your boots, and never take your coffee before noon.

Poor Lacy found that in his eagerness to serve Colonel Adair he had inflicted a heavy burden upon himself; for when he returned home there was still many a long and weary hour between him and the time he had appointed for his visit. Impatient for the coming of mid-day, the morning seemed a thousand-fold longer than it otherwise would have done; and whereas, having two or three more hours than usual to dispose of, Lacy should have gone about all his wonted employment more slowly and solemnly, the very anxiety that he felt made him hurry over things on which he was accustomed to loiter, and leave a thousand things undone which might have occupied his mind and filled up the vacancy. He swallowed his coffee boiling, eat his toast without taking the trouble of buttering it, threw down

the newspaper, finding all that it contained flat, stale, and unprofitable, and then sauntered out and stole down St. James' street, as the most approved method known of getting rid of time which we do not know what else to do with. It may be asked, What! was Charles Lacy's mind of so weak and feeble a cast that he could not find himself employment for a couple of hours when he had risen a little earlier than usual in the morning? Even so! on that one particular morning he could find no employment whatever which could detach his thoughts from subjects whereon it was useless to think and yet impossible to refrain from thinking. However, as he strolled down St. James' street, he encountered a personage who instantly gave a new direction to his thoughts, by confirming the tidings which he had heard the night before in regard to France. That personage was no other than the then commander-in-chief, who, with that fine simplicity of character which distinguished him, was walking calmly amongst his father's subjects with none of the assumptions of high rank. To Charles Lacy he was personally known; and, bidding him share his walk, he went on for some way conversing on the state of public affairs, and the probable result of the late events on the continent.

Lacy forgot not Colonel Adair, and as the opportunity now presented itself, he failed not to use it. The conversation was long, and though of some interest in regard to this tale, must be omitted to make room for other matter.—One sentence only it may be necessary to record. “Well, Captain Lacy,” said the Duke, as they concluded, and was about to turn away, “If you are contented to be Captain Lacy still, and wait for the step you had a right to expect, I dare say that the other matter can be accomplished. I must look how the list stands—will bear it in mind—and if, in the course of events, an opportunity occurs, will by no means fail.”

Lacy expressed his thanks, and took his leave, and rejoicing in all his successful arrangements of that morning, determined in his own mind that it must be twelve o'clock. Without looking at his watch then, for fear it should give the lie to his pre-determination in regard to the hour, he hurried on, entered Swallow street, and in less than five minutes was at the door he sought. The maid-servant, somewhat more tidy than usual, was standing with her

head half out, speaking to some person of no consequence, and to Lacy's enquiring for Colonel Adair, she replied he was out. The moment after, however, she recognised the inquirer, and swept away the clouds from Lacy's face more cleanly than ever brush from her hand swept dust off furniture, by exclaiming, "Oh, sir! you're the gentleman who saw the Colonel last night, aren't you?—You're Captain Lacy? oh, he said if you called, to tell you he'd be home directly, if you'd walk up."

Forthwith Lacy assented, and forthwith the maid led the way. His step, however, was as quick as hers, and though it cannot be denied that there was a sort of thrilling presentiment at his heart that he might find Helen Adair alone he gave the girl no time to announce him. Helen was in the drawing-room, and was alone; and in her fair hands was a small parallelogram of pasteboard called a card, on which a name was printed. She instantly let it fall upon the table, and as Lacy advanced to shake hands with her, his eye lighted upon the card, and he saw that it was one of his own. Now had it been the card of any other gentleman upon the face of the earth, Lacy in all probability would not have been jealous, but yet the sight of his own card in her hands at that time, called up the very exact contrary train of feelings to jealousy in his bosom. It strengthened his hope that he was loved, and yet the reader learned in psychology must not therefore deduce that he was vain, or that he was one of those men who suffer that sweet wheedling flirt, fair Hope, to play the fool with them as she likes. No, but the truth is, there was one particular fact connected with that card, which gave to the sight of it in Helen's hands, a particular import. Lacy, be it remembered, had never in his life left his card upon Colonel Adair, or sent it up to crave admission, or any thing of the kind. He had once and only once left a card at Dr. Bellingham's, while Helen was there, and that was upon one occasion, when he left for her herself some rare hot-house flowers which she had never seen, and wished to see; and the card had been left for Dr. Bellingham. We have all seen a spider spin its web of threads so thin, that fine is the eye which can detect them glistening in the sunshine, till one after another is added to the net, and they form as fair a piece of nature's own lace-work as it is possible to conceive, but fit to catch aught that flutters through the air under the size of a wasp.

Such also are the nets of hope and love, wrought of fine and almost imperceptible threads, till when least we think it, we see the glistening toils around our own hearts, which can escape no more, flutter they ever so stoutly.

Helen Adair laid down the card on the table, and she blushed as she did so; and there was a timidity and a softness in her whole manner which Lacy saw and felt to his very heart. The maid saw it too, and convinced that she had done the wisest thing in the world in showing the young gentleman up to the young lady, she shut the door like a compassionate girl as she was, and left them together.—Helen Adair, as we have said, had given Lacy her hand as the mere common form of salutation on meeting a kind friend; but Lacy, on his part, kept it a single instant longer in his than was altogether necessary, and as he did so, he looked into her beautiful eyes—so soft, so liquid, so full of light—till the long fringes dropped over them, and her cheek turned a little pale, and then burned again with a warmer glow than ever.

What a torrent of emotions rushed through Lacy's breast at that moment, and how the waves of irresolution tossed him to and fro! "She must see what I feel," he thought, "and yet if she do see, she may think I trifle with her, unless I give voice to those feelings; then, if I speak, she must tell her father. I cannot ask her not, and then—yet better that I should encounter the whole storm at once than let her doubt me for a moment." What is resolution, and prudence, and calculation, and wisdom, when a man's inclination takes the other side against him? Lacy looked at the clock on the mantle-piece, and it only stood at half-past eleven; "I shall have plenty of time," he thought. As he did so, he relinquished Miss Adair's hand, and she sank quietly back upon the sofa, with her eyes bent on the ground, and Lacy took the seat beside her. "I have come a little before my time," he said, "but I was up early, and somewhat anxious—"

Lacy paused with a slight return of irresolution, for Helen sat so still and so silent, that he would have given a good deal for a single word to help him on. She had given up her work, she moved not, she spoke not, she scarcely seemed to breathe, and her cheek had grown very pale.

"I thought it was later," continued Lacy, "and perhaps

my mistake regarding the hour, makes me an intruder upon you, Miss Adair—shall I leave you and return?"

It was the most awkward speech man ever made; but Helen's reply saved all. She had never been taught to conceal, and she answered at once, "Oh, no! my father will be home directly—he said at twelve," and she too looked at the clock, and as she did so, and saw that it was but half-past eleven, the warm blood again mounted bright into her cheek. She turned her eyes next to Lacy for but one single moment, with a look of doubt, and hesitation, and anxiety, as if she would have asked, "What should I say?" and then she dropped them again, and said nothing more.

It was irresistible. "Helen!" said Lacy, "dear Helen!" Then came a thundering knock at the street door, and Helen started up with a burning cheek and a bright drop or two glistening on her eyelashes. "Stay one moment," cried Lacy, catching her hand.

"Oh, no, not now, Captain Lacy," she replied; and then, seeing that the light in his eyes grew dim as she said "Captain Lacy,"—a name that he had never been called in Dr. Bellingham's family—she added, "not now, Charles!"—a name which she had heard him called a hundred times—and hurried to the door, where, pausing for one moment, she turned her eyes again upon him, half in tears, half in smiles, as if to say, "I would fain stay with you, if I dared." But at that moment, there was the slight whispering creak of one of Hoby's best boots heard at the bottom of the stairs, and Helen darted away.

Lacy's eyes remained bent upon the door, thinking of Helen Adair, and wishing the interrupter at the devil, even before he knew who it was; but how much more fervent became the latter operation of his mind, when the maid—who, to do her all manner of justice, had been rather slow in her movements—opened the door, and ushered in no less a personage than Ensign John Williamson, the son of his father's attorney and agent in the country, bearing in his face and in his demeanour that air of swaggering puppyish parvenuism, which, in the state of Lacy's feelings at the moment, was very-irritating. Luckily Lacy was a gentleman, and as such was able to put a restraint upon himself, and to refrain from doing what he wished when it was wrong. Otherwise, had he done what he would have liked

to do, he would have gone up to Ensign John Williamson, and taking him gently by the shoulder, would have turned him round till he brought his face directly towards the door, with his back towards himself, and then raising his foot, would have begun kicking, and never have ceased kicking, till he had kicked him into Piccadilly. But Lacy, as we have said, restrained, and returning Williamson's self-satisfied salutation with a somewhat cold and stately bow, he cast himself back upon the sofa again, resolved to sit out the infliction.

"I thought Helen Adair was here," said Williamson, after a moment's pause.

"I dare say Miss Adair will be here presently," replied Lacy, and the conversation again dropped. Williamson beat his boot with his stick, and Lacy who could not make up his mind to be anything but disagreeable, took a book off the table, and turned over the leaves, endeavouring, as far as possible, to forget that there was such a being in the room or in the world as Ensign John Williamson. At length the door opened again, after the endurance of about five minutes, and in glided Helen Adair, with that soft languor in her look, which a very few moments of great but pleasant excitement can produce. There were no tears now in her eyes, but the glow was not yet off her cheeks, and certainly, as she entered, Lacy thought her the most beautiful thing that God in all his beautiful creations had ever formed. To him, it was like the sun at noon sweeping away the morning storms, and the clouds quitted his brow and heart as soon as she appeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT a strange and thrilling sensation it is, when under the eyes of unconscious strangers, we meet with one between whose bosom and our own there are a thousand secret sympathies, mutual feelings, and wishes, and hopes, and knowledge of which the lookers-on have no idea—when we talk to the beloved in a language which they understand not—and when every glance, and look, and movement, reads a comment on, and gives a meaning to, the common-place things of ordinary society. Oh those spoken

hieroglyphics of the heart—when, like the birds and the oxen graven on the Egyptian stones, each ordinary object has its occult meaning, which says a world of mysterious things to us that others understand not—oh those spoken hieroglyphics of the heart, how sweet, how very sweet, they are N/

Helen Adair entered the room, and as she did so, she gave one single glance to Lacy, saw the light that kindled in his eyes at her coming, and then, turning to Williamson, bade him welcome in a tone which was not very cordial, but from which no one could have discovered that his presence was most unwelcome to her. She did not exactly give him her hand, for she had particular reasons of her own for not doing so ; but he, on his part, took it, and shook hands with her warmly. Sitting down nearly opposite to Lacy, she addressed herself first to her new visitor, and asked a few common-place questions about his family, to which he replied at large ; but as soon as an opportunity of changing the topic arrived, she looked to Lacy for support, and that very glance made him feel that, from that day forth Helen Adair would rely in full confidence on him, and on him alone, in every situation of pain, of difficulty, and of distress. Oh, how pleasant was that feeling to one who loved her as he did ! It took a heavy burden off his mind to know that she was now fully aware of his affection ; “ and yet,” he thought, “ so little has been said, so few words have passed, that in all probability she will find nothing therein to tell her father ; so that I shall be spared from any premature discussion of points which must require time and patience, and perseverance to overcome. I must let her see my reasons however,” he continued, revolving the present and the future with all the keen anxiety of an ardent, but not very hopeful, nature—“ I must let her see my reasons for not proceeding boldly, and at once, to claim her hand, or she may still learn to think that I am trifling with her.”

Such were the ideas that passed through Lacy’s mind while the first three words hung upon his lips, as he hastened to join in her conversation with young Williamson, and to drag it away from the subject of Mr. Williamson, father—and Mrs. Williamson, mother—and all the masters and misses Williamson, sons and daughters. Now they are two or three ways of changing a conversation ; the first and most common, especially amongst vulgar people, is the

taking it, the conversation, by the hair of the head, and dragging it whether it will or not to something else ; or in other words, the presupposing a connection between what somebody has said, and something else, where there is no connection at all, and then going on upon the new track, while the people are wondering how you got out of the old. This is what the French would call the *a proflos de bottes* system. Another plan is by some leading word, or well-directed bait to draw the person you are talking with into a side branch of the subject, and thence seek another outlet as speedily as possible. But by far the most masterly plan is to search amongst the objects by which you are surrounded, for something which may call momentary attention ; and then when you have snapped in two the thread of the conversation which you wish to get rid of, you can lead the new thread which way you choose. This was the plan upon which Lacy fell in the present instance ; for, noticing that Helen in the embarrassment of the encounter with young Williamson had taken up a purse she had been previously netting, and was going on with prodigious rapidity, he seized the first pause to say, as if his whole thoughts were busy with the purse, "Take care, Miss Adair, or you will spoil your purse !"

"How so ?" demanded she, looking up with a smile, and still going on.

"Because you are hurrying on so fast," replied Lacy.

"I wished to get it finished to-day," replied Helen with a slight blush, laying down the purse at the same time, quite satisfied to have done with it, now that the conversation was changed.

"There is a proverb against haste," replied Lacy, giving somewhat of a particular emphasis to his words ; "there is a proverb against haste, and every one must have seen how often our own eagerness defeats our best schemes, by leading us to hurry the execution of that which ought to be done carefully and delicately."

The aphorism was so grave a one upon so slight a subject, that Helen looked up with a glance of inquiry ; but it was young Williamson who replied, "Well now, that is not my way, Captain Lacy," he said, "I say with young Rapid in the play, 'Push along ! keep moving !' In war, or in love, it is all the same : never stand still ! always keep going on ! and the faster the better, hey ?"

"I do agree with you," replied Lacy coldly; "Miss Adair, you shall be the judge, and as a gallant officer like Mr. Williamson has decided upon what is best in war, I choose my instance in love. Now we are told on the best authority, that the course of true love never did run smooth; by which must be meant that there are always some difficulties to be encountered, obstacles to be overcome, and dangers to be avoided. Now we will suppose a man deeply, sincerely, unchangeably in love, whose whole happiness for life is staked upon his success, who sees before him nothing but misery and despair, and a long dreary life of comfortless solitude if any thing should interpose to destroy his hopes; while if he were successful, the brightest joy, the most certain happiness, the sweet, the balmy cup of domestic peace would be his without a doubt."

Young Williamson had taken up the purse which Helen had laid down, and was doing it no good between his fingers and thumbs, but neither Lacy nor Helen saw any thing more concerning him, except that his eyes were not upon them; and there was a meaning in Lacy's look, as well as in his words and tone, which while it showed that he thought their companion a dull fool, made Helen's heart palpitate with a thousand thrilling emotions which she had never felt before, and which in the intensity of their novelty nearly overpowered her. She felt the blushes rushing to her cheek. She felt at every fresh word that he uttered, the tears, the sweet and happy tears of gratified affection rising to her eyes, and as he paused for a moment gazing full upon her, she clasped her hands together with a scarcely perceptible motion, and raised an imploring look to his face, as if she would have said, "Do not go on, I beseech you, if you would not have me betray all that is taking place in this heart."

Lacy read it, and rightly in a moment, and Williamson, perceiving that there was a pause, looked up. "Well then," continued Lacy, in a lighter and a gayer tone, "suppose all this that I have mentioned to be the case; and suppose even that his love be returned, but that he foresees difficulties and opposition upon the part of the lady's parents, or of his own—difficulties that may be removed, opposition that may cease, by the simple exercise of a little patience and prudence. However firmly and unalterably he may be determined ultimately to stake life itself, were it

necessary upon the cast; were it not better to pause, and even leave his love unspoken, than to call such opposition into action, as may perchance overthrow all his hopes in the very outset?"

"Oh, hang prudence," cried young Williamson, "I say no; he had better not wait an hour! No, no, if his love is very ardent and true, he will set parents and friends at defiance—bid them go to the devil—and make a runaway match of it."

"A very dutiful view of the subject," replied Lacy, "but it was to Miss Adair that I appealed; her ideas may be different."

"Oh, very, very far!" replied Helen. "I think if the woman sees, and knows that she is loved, she will fully appreciate the conduct of her lover in waiting, even should it be many long years; and thank him from her very heart for sparing her those pains and distresses which opposition, or even discussion on such a subject must always inflict most dreadfully upon a woman's heart."

"And how much more must he love her for such feelings?" replied Lacy, imprudently enough, for their companion was looking up, and Lacy could scarcely pronounce those words, without a glance of thanks to her who had so kindly cleared away all his doubts, and fixed his purposes to the right course. Williamson did not appear to see, however, that there was any thing particular in the manner of either of his companions; and Lacy, content and happy, suffered the conversation to glide into more general channels; till another knock at the door announced Colonel Adair's return.

By this time the blush which had fluttered so often over Helen's cheek, that it had left it for some time more rosy than usual, had again faded away, and she could calmly say, "That is my father," as she heard the sound. But on his part the young ensign immediately rose and quitted the room, saying that he wished to speak to Colonel Adair for a moment alone. Strange to say, Helen almost trembled to be thus left with the man on all the earth she loved best, but the feelings in her bosom had during that morning so shaken and agitated her, that she feared lest Lacy by another word, ay, or even a look, should again rouse them from the momentary tranquillity into which they had fallen. Lacy saw a glance of apprehension pass over her countenance,

and he soon relieved her. "I wish very much, my dear Miss Adair," he said, "to obtain the pleasure of your acquaintance for my cousin, Lady Mary Denham. We have been accustomed from infancy to regard each other as brother and sister, and Mary is sure to take a deep interest in all those that I esteem—I wish it much, especially," he added in a lower tone, "under present circumstances. May I propose a visit from her to your father?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Helen. "But I do not know whether"—

At that moment however, Colonel Adair entered the room, as tall and as erect as ever, speaking over his shoulder to young Williamson who followed him a step behind, like his orderly receiving commands. "Very much obliged to you, sir—very much obliged," he was saying, "but I am happy to say, that it is unnecessary. I feel the intended kindness, though, as much as if I had taken advantage of it, and so I beg you to inform your father. Captain Lacy, I am delighted to see you. Following up your hint of last night, I have just been to the Horse-Guards, and spoken for five minutes to the Commander-in-chief; but I find, my enthusiastic young friend, that you have been beforehand with me; and whether our hopes prove fallacious or not, at all events, a thousand thanks for your kind, most kind exertions. Helen, my dear, there is a hope of my getting on active service again—and that through the kind interest of our excellent friend;" and as he spoke the old officer shook Lacy heartily by the hand; but a cloud as dark as thunder came over the brow of young Williamson. He could not refrain even from saying, "Do you not think it somewhat late in life to resume the service, Colonel?"

"Oh, no!" the old gentleman replied, good humouredly, "many an older man than I am never reaches the rank of colonel."

"And many an older man than Mr. Williamson," added Lacy somewhat haughtily, "will be proud to serve under Colonel Adair."

"Oh, of course, of course," replied the other, "I only thought your health might suffer in any fatiguing campaign."

"No-fear, no-fear," answered Colonel Adair, "though I do confess I am somewhat behindhand, I dare say, in regard to the novelties of the service—I must make haste and get

up all the new rules and regulations, for things are always improving ;" and the conversation, deviating into military details, soon became such as would not be at all instructive to the reader. The hour of noon was now past, and Lacy was beginning to feel some uneasiness from the non-appearance of Mr. Owen Snipes, who on all ordinary occasions was the most punctual man in Europe. In five minutes however he was announced, much to the astonishment of Colonel Adair, who could not conceive who Mr. Owen Sniyes could be, till Lacy informed him that he had requested that gentleman to meet him there on business. The explanation was still proceeding when the worthy little lawyer entered the room, bowing with rigid formality to every one it contained, and still between every bow re-elevating his person, till his back presented its usual concave, his stomach its accustomed convex. The first thing his eye fell upon was the clock on the mantle-piece, the sight of which instantly called his own watch from its snug receptacle. "Not right, sir ! not right," he exclaimed, turning to Colonel Adair, " eight minutes and three quarters too fast, sir ! Not by the Horse Guards, as I term it. It wanted just half a minute to twelve when I put my hand upon the knocker. I always allow half a minute for opening the door and going up stairs. If the servants keep me, I can't help it—theirs is the delict, as I term it.—But God bless my soul, have I not the pleasure of seeing Miss Adair—Why my jewel, my rose-bud, my nightingale, as I term it—why do you know, sir, she sung me out of a fit of the gout when I was down with my good friend Bellingham at the parsonage, as I term it ?"

" I am very happy to hear, sir, that my daughters singing could have such an effect," replied Colonel Adair. " It has cheered me under many a heart-ache, but I did not know that it could cure more corporeal ailments."

Helen willingly admitted the old gentleman's claims to acquaintance, and for some minutes, the conversation turned to the past. At length however, it became necessary to proceed to business, and equally necessary,—as young Williamson, with the true unconsciousness of a bore, seemed disposed to loiter there the whole day.—to give him a hint to depart. That office would naturally have devolved upon Colonel Adair; but Lacy, who from an intuitive perception which one sometimes has, that a person is destined to be an

annoyance to us through life, disliked as well as despised the young Parvenu, took the task upon himself at once, and though he executed it certainly in gentlemanly tone and language, yet undoubtedly he did not do it graciously. Colonel Adair added a few words to soften the matter, and for the time, Williamson beat his retreat. Helen Adair also retired, and Mr. Owen Snipes, who was now better aware of the character of the person he had to deal with in Colonel Adair, from all he had heard concerning him from Dr. Bellingham, displayed a degree of tact which surprised Lacy, in covering every little circumstance or particular which could in any degree hurt the feelings of an honourable and independent man, in borrowing money for the first time in his life. The whole transaction was concluded as pleasantly as such a transaction could be ; and taking Lacy's arm, the old lawyer walked homeward, leaving Colonel Adair free from the embarrassments which had irritated and distressed him when first we introduced him to the reader. And now we are going to point out a strange point in natural history, to the worthy and learned reader ; which is, that things which escape the mental eyes of the clever and the wise, though those things and their noses be as close together every day, as the two grindstones of a mill, are often found out, discovered, analysed, synthesised, and made use of, by persons who have no wit, and very little opportunity.

That observation, however, like almost all other good observations, is very little applicable to the present question. It is a sort of epiphonema, like a monkey on a ladder, only holding on by one leg ; for Mr. Snipes, though he had not had much opportunity of observing Charles Lacy and Helen Adair, had a good deal of wit of a particular kind, and the use he made of it in this instance, was exemplified in the following speech.—“ Ho ho ! hey, dear sir ! Ho ho ! ” he cried, as soon as he himself and Lacy were at the distance of a hundred yards from the house,—“ so the little god, as I term it, has turned money lender. Well, well, my dear sir, putting love out of the question which of course it is in my case, I would have lent the money myself, I do believe, without security, if I had known that it was Helen Adair's father who wanted it.”

“ Why, my good friend,” replied Lacy ; “ I think from all I said, you might have divined that such was the case.”

"Perhaps I might, perhaps I might," answered the man of law; "but I suppose the little purblind gentleman had something to do in blinding my eyes too. But she is, Charles Lacy,—she is a sweet creature, as I term it; and as I am sure you are not a man to trifle with any girl, high or low, I may wish you joy in having chosen one of the most charming and excellent women in Europe: and besides, she is of as good a family as your own. Her grandfather—no, her father's grandfather, was the Earl Adair, who made so large a fortune in India while he was a younger brother; and then his father again, was the Lord Adair, who was sent on an embassy to Spain, in the reign of George the first; and then—but at all events, it is a very suitable match for you in every thing but that cursed item, fortune, as I term it. But I am afraid your father will kick at that, my dear young friend."

"I am afraid so too," answered Lacy, "but I am in hopes Colonel Adair may yet mend his fortunes, at least so far as not to bring my father's pride into play against us. The Colonel is likely to get into active service, and as we have now the certainty of a sharp war, a thousand things may occur to raise him from the situation into which dame Fortune has cast him."

"But suppose you and he are killed, butchered, put to the sword, as I term it," demanded the little lawyer, "for such things will happen in your very christian and civilized trade, my young friend; what is to become of the poor girl then? From what I see, there she will be, left an orphan without a penny."

"No," answered Lacy, "I was just about to speak to you on that subject. I wish to alter my will, and put in the name of Helen Adair for the Hertford estate. You know it well, for you described it particularly in the last will."

"Know it well, to be sure," replied the lawyer, "worth twenty thousand pounds at least; but you must not do that, my noble captain, as I term it. You may cause scandal, and hurt the dear girl's name more than you benefit her pocket. No, no, leave the matter to me; I will manage it, I will manage it, I tell you. I have as much right to leave her a fortune, as you have, Captain Charles; nay, better if you come to that, when for you, she has only as yet made your heart ache; while for me, she made me forget that."

heels were aching as I term it. Ha! ha! ha! as I term it."

"No! but that will not exactly answer my purpose," replied Lacy. "I wish, even if death should take me,—which no man who presents himself to loaded muskets can be sure the grim-visaged monster will not do—I wish still to give her some proof of my unaltered, unalterable regard, and therefore I must have my way. No one will ever doubt my motives that knows me, and I should like to see the man who would throw an imputation upon her character."

"What, you would come out of the grave and fight him, eh?" cried Mr. Snipes, "you forget we were calculating upon your being killed. But, no, no! I see how it is, as I term it, you are afraid either that the testy old bachelor should change his mind, or forget, or that he has not twenty thousand pounds to leave. But, as I term it, I never change my mind about such things, when people do not change their conduct; and as to forgetting, when did I ever forget any thing in my life? Then regarding the money, Captain Charles, let me tell you, though I do but keep a cook and a parlour wench, I am at least as rich as a Lacy! come!" He spoke half pettishly, half playfully, and then added, "Well, well, I know you will have your own way, and perhaps it is as well; but I will do what I think right too, for it is a good thought which never struck me before. I always thought she was well off. Her father must have run through a good deal of money, for I know a something about his early affairs. I was sent for down to draw the old lord's will, but I could not go, and it was done by another; I mean when he altered his will. But to come back,—as you will have your way, I will tell you how you must manage. You must leave the Hertfordshire estate to her father, for his life; and then to the daughter, naming trustees, that he may not spend it. Then, your leaving it to the father first, will prevent all scandal. Trust to an old bachelor, as I term it, to keep clear of scandal."

"Well, I dare say you are right," replied Lacy, "but get the will prepared as soon as possible, my good sir; for under present circumstances it would not surprise me to be ordered to join, and be off to the continent in two days' time. You have heard that Buonaparte is in Paris. The information is certain, I had it from the duke this morning."

"Oh, the monster will be in London before we have

done with him yet," replied Mr. Snipes. "I always thought he would. I'll raise a regiment of volunteers myself, and call them the Snipe fencibles, as I term it. I declare I will."

"I think we shall most likely save you the trouble," replied Lacy. "Wherever the British bayonet has appeared, it has carried all before it, and depend upon it that in this case we shall trust the defence of Europe to no other hands but our own. With a Wellington at our head, and a fair field before us, I feel sure that Napoleon's first battle will be the burial place of his power and dynasty."

"Such confidence is the way to make it so, as I term it," replied Mr. Snipes. "But whither go ye just now, my young friend? If you can come with me, and wait half an hour, the will or codicil shall be drawn up and you can sign it."

"I will come in about an hour," replied Lacy, "at present I am going to see Mary."

"Ay! what will *she* say to these new arrangements?" demanded the old bachelor, elevating his thick eyebrows. "There has been a talk, you know my young friend; there has been a talk."

"There has been a great deal of nonsense talked, my dear sir," answered Lacy, "but to show you what complete nonsense it is, I am now going to ask Mary to come and visit Miss Adair, in order to give her that sort of countenance and protection, which as yet she is without in London."

"A very good plan," answered Mr. Snipes, "and as you and your cousin know each other best, I have nothing to say against it, only to beg my very reverential respects to her fair merry Ladyship, as I term it, assuring her that I wear my beloved pigtail still, notwithstanding her objunctions. My compliments to good Lady Pontypool, who would have now been three thousand a-year richer, if she had followed my advice. I remember my sage remonstrances were all overthrown by a peal of laughter, caused by her good-for-nothing husband, asking if I belonged to the family of Snipes of the Fens, Lincolnshire; but nevertheless my best compliments to her, for she is an excellent woman."

"She is indeed!" replied Lacy, "but of one thing let me warn you, my dear sir. In regard to this business of Miss Adair, I have been obliged to confide in you entirely,

but still it must not even be whispered to any one, especially not to Lady Pontypool ; as I have not yet thought it right, from a thousand motives which you may conceive, to propose to Miss Adair."

"Indeed, indeed!" cried the old gentleman, "why I thought I saw a fresh made declaration, as I term it, still twinkling in the corner of your eye, and burning upon her cheek when I came in this morning. But your secret is quite safe with me. I do not gossip ! we lawyers are father confessors to so many men, that if we were to blab one word of what is confided to us, we should deserve to be whipped at the cart's tail. So now fare you well. If you come to me at about three o'clock, you may find me as usual ~~at~~ dinner, and I shall order another mutton chop to be put upon the Escorial, as I term it, which may serve you for luncheon, good bye, good bye!" and giving Lacy two of his fingers, as usual, he left him, in order to pursue his own particular way home.

The reader has doubtless by this time so far entered into the character of Mr. Owen Snipes, that a few words more will be sufficient to explain all that is necessary to be explained in regard to him. Notwithstanding Lord Pontypool's jest upon his name, he was in truth a man of good family, though the small fortune of a younger brother had forced him to labour at the dry study of the law. His having chosen the more lucrative, though what is generally considered the less dignified branch of his profession, had given some umbrage to his family, which he in return had revenged by giving way to all the oddities of a naturally eccentric character. This ended in a complete breach between himself and his nearest relations, which had lasted so many years that those near relations were now extinct. His more distant connections however, whose dignity and pride were not immediately implicated by the oddities of Mr. Snipe's behaviour, continued their acquaintance with him, and let him do as he liked. Thus whenever he chose to seek the society with which he was born to associate, it was always open to him, and as his wealth increased, both in reality and in report, many a poor peer was glad to say, "My cousin Mr. Owen Snipes." Those very connections however tended to increase his wealth, for being known to many, and known to be both clever and honest, at the time we speak of he had nearly one-third of the Court Guide for clients.

CHAPTER IX.

SALTS and magnesia, rhubarb, calomel, ginger, brandy and water, champagne, moderation in all things, virtue, castor oil, stoicism, and blue pill, have all been recommended by various philosophers, divines, and physicians in order to produce in the human frame that passion or state of existence called happiness, to remove evil spirits and feelings of gloom, to gild the scene around us, and to light up the great kaleidoscope at the butt end of which we live. But, dearly beloved reader, I have a prescription too, which I beg you to take if you can. Try *success*, reader—try *success!* and if that will not do, fall upon your knees and go to prayers—which, indeed, you may as well do in any case, as for us dependent beings, existence is, and should be hulie better than the transition between petition and thanksgiving. Some pages back we represented Charles Lacy in a state of deep despondency; but he very wisely had sought the remedy which we have recommended above; had gone to the great chemist Fate, and having found the drug, had taken that morning as we have seen, a large and potent dose, which sent him on to Lady Mary Denham's door, with his heart a load lighter, and his brow unclouded. Thus when he walked into Lady Mary's drawing room, he was certainly as handsome a man as any woman not in love would wish to see; and Lady Mary, who under the tuition of De Wint was painting portraits of a number of pots, and pans, and pickling jars abducted from the kitchen, thought him decidedly the handsomest or most handsome—whichever of the two the reader likes best—man she had seen in her life—except one! There was an exception, dear reader, but who that exception comprised matters not to you or me two straws, for it was certainly neither of us.

Well, Lacy was so happy that he was quite full of his own concerns, and wished to speak about them as soon as decency permitted, especially as my Aunt Pontypool was out of the room, and De Wint had just gone; but Lady Mary perceived this disposition upon his part, and with a spice of good natured malice resolved to tease him a little, and let his eager heart broil on the gridiron of his own impatience. After the first salutation she affected to be eager

too, made him examine what she had been painting, then took him to the other side of the room to look at a picture of Stanley's which she had just bought—one of those pictures which at any other time Lacy would have delighted in. It was the representation of a town in France, with the Old Gothic buildings fretting, like the rich tracery of their own aisles, the long perspective of the streets ; and there were the pretty Norman women in their gay and picturesque dresses, and over all spread a blue airy softness which few can give so well as the hand that painted it.—Lacy looked at and admired it, and declared Stanley to be one of the first, if not the very first painter in his line in England ; but Lady Mary was not satisfied, and she would have him look at every particular figure, and examine each line, and each shade, and praise it over and over again, and then suddenly breaking off, she cast herself back on the sofa with her laughing eyes full of gay meaning—which in any other woman, or any other man might have been supposed to have a spice of coquetry in it—looking full up in his face while she demanded—“ And now, my dear cousin Charles, what is it you want with me ? ”

Lacy accordingly sat down beside her and told her his story, and what he wanted her to do. He did not, it is true, exactly say that he was in love with Helen Adair, or that he intended to marry her, if she would marry him ; nor did he explain that for these reasons he wished to gain for her the friendship and companionship of one on whose kindness and tenderness he could rely ; but he told Lady Mary of Colonel Adair's family and connections, and of his former state and situation, and of the part which his own father Lord Methwyn, had had therein, and the part which he believed Mr. Williamson, Lord Methwyn's agent had contributed. Then he explained that Colonel Adair had a daughter, whereupon the smallest ray of laughing light in the world came out of Lady Mary's eyes ; but Lacy went on to speak of his acquaintance with her at Dr. Bellingham's, and he told Dr. and Mrs. Bellingham's opinion of her—he did not tell his own—and then he showed that she was for the time in London, living out of the society in which she ought to mingle, and then he stopped.

Now Lady Mary as clearly perceived, as any woman ever did perceive the secrets of a man she was talking with, all that was going on in Lacy's heart, and from the very first

mention of Miss Adair she settled it in her own mind that Lacy was in love with her. Perhaps—I do not say that it was so—but perhaps the slightest little touch of vanity—that degree thereof which the meekest-hearted woman can never be without, might make her think—“Aye, that is the reason why he has never fallen in love with me.” But however, as she was very glad that he had never so fallen, inasmuch as she liked him much better as a cousin, than she could have done as a husband, and could not very well have refused him in either capacity if he had chosen to propose it—as this was the case, I say, she was not the least angry with him for loving another; and at any former period of her life might have teased him a good deal about his attachment. But within the last two or three days a change had come over Lady Mary Denham in regard to affairs of love, which saved Lacy in the present instance. She was just in a state of mind, if any one actually mentioned the name of the little tyrant of gods and men, to go on in a sort of bravado, lauging and jesting upon the subject, in the hope that those who heard her would believe it quite impossible that Lady Mary Denham could ever be in love with any one; but if nobody pronounced the watchword name of love, to take especial care not to let pass her own lips, lest it should seem to pass them too feelingly. When Lacy stopped then, she paused also ere she replied, and for a while with her eyes bent on the ground she seemed to be thinking of something else. Perhaps she was too; for who can say in the brief moment which elapsed between Lacy’s last words and her reply, whither thought—which while the lightning winks once in the western sky can girdle the great earth with a spider’s thread,—might not have led her.

She looked up however the next minute and said, “Well, Charles, the best thing I can do then is to go and call upon her. Besides, I think my Aunt Pontypool knows her already, or at least her father, for I have heard her talk of Lords Adair without number, and a Major Adair too, who was a very handsome man in her young days, when to her account poor human nature was a great deal prettier than at present. I think I have heard her tell of his having made a love match with a clergyman’s daughter, and poor dear Aunt Pontypool you know, always sympathises greatly with people who make love matches. She keeps a calendar of

them I believe, or at least a list, where those who have done most foolishly stand highest.—Well, do not look so grave, Charles ; I know all that I am saying is very wicked and very wrong ; but you know I may as well laugh at my aunt's list, as there is no earthly chance of my taking my place in it."

"I do not know that at all, Mary," replied her cousin, "it would not surprise me to see you qualified for it to-morrow."

No, not to-morrow, Charles, that is too soon a great deal," she answered, laughing, "I shall not qualify, as they call it, for a long while, whatever you may do, cousin Charles Lacy.—Come, do not tease me, or I will tease you. Why did not you marry me yourself, and then there would have been no fear of my making a love match you know, or you either, Charles ; and I am afraid as it is that you are in a perilous way, my poor cousin."

Lacy was about to reply, but she stopped him, exclaiming, "Peace, peace ! let us make peace ! I am dull and out of spirits to-day. What day of the week is it ? oh, Wednesday—Yes, yesterday was the opera night. Well, when shall I go and call upon Miss Adair ? where does she live ? is she very pretty ? as handsome as I am ? Now answer me that, and show yourself either the most impudent or the most faithless man upon the earth ! You will never have the face to tell me that she is more beautiful than I am, nor the baseness to declare that I am more beautiful than she is, when you have just been telling her on your knees that she is the loveliest of God's creatures."

"I certainly never told her such a thing in my life," answered Lacy, "whatever I might think ; but let us be serious for a few minutes, Mary, for I have a good deal to explain in regard to their situation, which may mingle some pain with the pleasure your visit may give them ;" and Lacy having again gained her attention, proceeded to state the position and situation of the dwelling which their very confined circumstances forced them to occupy for the time.

"Oh, but you know, Charles," replied Lady Mary, "that I care nothing about that. It is a sweet girl in misfortune, and a gentlemanly old man in undeserved adversity, that I go to see ; not their lodgings or their furniture."

"True, Mary," answered Lacy, "but the difficulty will lie in making them know that such are your feelings. Why

it is, that in adversity we can never divest our minds of the conviction that contempt mingles with pity, I cannot tell ; but every day, Mary, we see those who have been the most generous and noble-minded themselves in prosperity shrink, when reverses have befallen them, from that commiseration which none can know so well as they do, is often as free from any scornful feeling as any other part of man's intercourse with his fellow creatures. Perhaps it is that there is an imperfection mixes with our best actions ; a pride may be taken in doing good, which is lowered when we become the object of benevolence to others."

" All very true, I dare say, Charles," replied Lady Mary, " but I will take care to make them feel that I have no pride of any kind, and that I permit no one else to have any either, so that I will answer for it they will forget before I have been ten minutes in their presence that they are living in a small lodging just as much as I shall. You do not know, you never found out what a charming, delightful, engaging creature I can make myself when I like it ; and therefore as soon as ever I have got possession of Miss Adair, I shall, with the true generosity of my sex, use all my arts to make a conquest of Charles Lacy, in the full hope that he may have given away his heart to some one else, and that I may make him prove false. But here comes my Aunt Pontypool, and of course we must ask her opinion upon all these matters."

Lacy rose and shook hands with Lady Pontypool with the warmth of regard which he really felt towards her, fully expressed in his manner ; but her ladyship looked a little embarrassed, and proceeded to let Lacy know that Major Kennedy's visit that morning had been in fact to her, as she had expressed a wish to have a book of the new opera, and he had brought her one. This was done in as quiet and easy a tone as possible, and she took care not to look in the least towards Lady Mary, who for her part blushed like a rose, and wished with all her heart that she had told her cousin of Major Kennedy's visit before her aunt came in.

But Lacy, on the other hand, knew my Aunt Pontypool well enough to be only amused ; and replied with a gay smile, " On my word, my dear Lady Pontypool, Kennedy's attentions to you are becoming very marked. The world is beginning to talk, I can assure you. Why last night he

was so deep in conversation with you that no one had any chance. Had he but addressed a word or two to Mary," he proceeded, with a gay look to his cousin, "the matter would not have been so particular. I only speak of it you know, because sometimes ladies go so far before they are aware, that it is impossible to retract with honour."

"Oh nonsense, nonsense, Charles," cried the worthy lady, blushing like a girl of fifteen, "how can you talk so to an old woman? I am old enough to be his mother. I am sure it was not to me his attentions were directed."

Lacy had a great mind to ask if Mary were not their object then; but he saw that his fair cousin was uneasy, and though he looked the question quite sufficient to make Mary feel that he was sparing her, he did not give it utterance. Mary resolved to have an opportunity of sparing him some day, but in the mean time she hastened to turn the conversation into another channel by inquiring, "My dear aunt, did you not once know a Major Adair?"

"Certainly," answered Lady Pontypool, "because he was my second cousin. His father, the honourable Augustas Adair, married my mother's first cousin, Lady Sarah Bluit, who was great grand daughter to the famous Lord

"Oh never mind, never mind whose great grand-daughter she was, my dear aunt," interrupted Lady Mary, "I never can recollect whose great grand-daughter I am myself. But this is the most delightful thing in the world. If he be your second cousin, his daughter must be my third cousin."

"If he have a daughter," replied Lady Pontypool. "but I did not know he had a daughter."

This doubt stopped Lady Mary's spirits, which were beginning to overflow again, after having cast off a momentary embarrassment which the comments of her aunt and Lacy on Major Kennedy's visit had occasioned. "If he have a daughter!" she exclaimed, "how very provoking to doubt it, my dear aunt. Come, tell us what became of your Major Adair. Did he die? Was he killed? Did his horse fall and fracture his skull? In short my dear aunt, what became of him? Can you tell?

"Really, Mary, you are very odd," replied Lady Pontypool, "what signifies to you what became of him? But if you want to know, as far as I ever heard he may be alive now. He was in the army as you know, and afterwards

he rose to the rank of colonel ; but about that time, poor fellow ! he married a clergyman's daughter, on which his grandfather disinherited him, and he had nothing but his mother's fortune, which was small. He went to join the army in Spain, and after that I never heard anything more of him, except that he was severely wounded at Albuera."

" Oh it is the same—I am sure it is the same !" cried Lady Mary, " and she is my third cousin, that is to say, for short, my cousin. So I have more right to her than you, Charles, and you shall have nothing to do with her, Captain Lacy, except under my permission ; and I will go and see her this very day—Nay, you need not speak a word, Charles—I am determined. Have I not a right to see my own cousin when I like ?"

" But is she in town ?" demanded Lady Pontypool, " and what is become of her father ?"

" Father and daughter are both in town," answered Lady Mary, " Lacy has just told me of their being here ; but they are very poor, my dear aunt, and very uncomfortably lodged, so that it is the more necessary that we should go and see them directly."

" Oh certainly !" cried Lady Pontypool, " but cannot you have them here, Mary ? There is plenty of room in this house ; and Colonel Adair was one of the most charming men in the world. Cannot you have them here to stay with you for a time ?"

" Certainly, if they like to come," answered Lady Mary, " but we must not hurry matters too much, my dear aunt, lest their pride take alarm. Let us go and see them first, and then find what, and how much we can do to serve them without hurting their feelings."

" Spoken like yourself !" said Lacy, " ever considerate and kind."

" Aye, Charles !" she answered, " am not I a very charming girl now ? I knew you would think so at last. I dare say we might have made a very happy couple, if we had chosen to follow the plan the world laid out for us. It is a pity it is too late."

Lady Pontypool heard in wonder, and concluding there had been some quarrel between the cousins, set herself seriously to reconcile them, vowing that it was never too late, &c. Lady Mary laughed, and Lacy to change the

subject related his adventures of the preceding night, after he had left them at the door of the opera house.

“ Is it possible ? ” cried Lady Mary, “ why, Charles, I did not know that such misery could exist. I thought that there was always a place in every parish where the poor could get immediate relief, and that no one need know such a thing as starvation.”

“ That is true certainly, Mary,” answered Lacy, “ but I am sorry to say that at those places the impudent and the rascally too often gain the means of vice and indolence, while the really poor, the honest, and the virtuous, rather choose to starve than take advantage of an institution, which by one means or another has combined degradation and relief so intimately, that they cannot be separated. Depend upon it no year passes in London, without more than one person dying of actual want.”

“ Good God ! ” cried Lady Mary, clasping her hands, “ are you really serious in that assertion, Charles ? and if so, how can we remedy such a state ? for it must be the fault of the rich and high that these things exist.”

“ Not exactly, Mary,” answered Lacy, “ like all the evils of every country—except the natural ones of sickness and death—this state of things depends upon the vices of society in general ; and in these instances not so much upon the faults of the rich, as of the poor themselves. It is not so much that the rich are either hard-hearted or indifferent to the wants of others, though there are of course individual instances of their being so—as that amongst the poorer classes there is so much knavery, so much deceit, so much vice, that those who set out with the most benevolent feelings, soon get checked and chilled by frequent imposition. Instead of giving to every one that asks, as they would have done at first, they submit every case to long and slow examination ; and many a deserving person starves before it is ascertained that he is not an impostor. How many extraordinary stories of want and misery are true ! and yet one half of the suspicious points which existed in the tale told me last night, would cause many an application to be refused without even an investigation. But who can blame a person who has twenty times been cheated by the most plausible stories in the world, for not giving any attention to one that is improbable and wild ? ”

“ Well, I would rather give to an hundred cheats,” cried

Lady Mary. "than that one honest man should starve: but at all events, Charles, let us hear of this family again, and we can all do something, not alone to give them present relief, but to put them in a better condition for the future."

"Indeed, Mary," said Lady Pontypool, returning to the first part of her niece's reply to Lacy, "indeed I think that those people that you call cheats, are as much to be pitied as any others. Depend upon it they would not cheat if they were not in great distress."

"I do not know that, my dear aunt," replied Lady Mary, "but I do think that rich people should take means to ensure that no poor and virtuous person applies to them in vain."

"Many rich people do so, my dear cousin," replied Lacy; "our acquaintance, Lord Dudley and Ward spends several thousands per annum in well-directed bounties,* which are never heard of but by those they fall upon; and the name of Hope will be immortal in the hearts of the poor, whose gratitude and prayers are preparing a place for him in those mansions where there is no deceit."

CHAPTER X.

I REMEMBER once seeing a friend, who has for several years been executioner *de litte* to a great literary butterfly-rack, amuse himself and others for half an hour after dinner by frustrating the efforts of a fat unwieldy frog in its attempts to hop over his foot. Whichever way the unfortunate brute turned, there was the opposing foot, and whenever it fancied itself sure of a clear hop in any direction, it was certain to be met and tossed back again before it knew what it was about. I thought at the time that my good friend was very like Fate, which sometimes seems to take a pleasure in frustrating all our efforts great or small; and appears to find as much amusement in disappointing the arrangements of the most insignificant being, as in overthrowing the grandest schemes of the greater puppets who play

* This applies to the year when this dialogue occurred. What ~~was done~~ in these respects by the nobleman who afterwards succeeded to the title I do not know.

the parts of kings and conquerors, on the wider stage of the world. If you want a proof, dear reader, just take a sunshiny day, and make up your mind to go and see the Panorama of Thebes, or any other thing you like, immediately after luncheon. Let your wife and your eldest daughter go up stairs to dress for the expedition, and the coachman be punctual. Your wife will keep the carriage five minutes, and be a very moderate wife too, and then just as she is coming down the stairs, putting on her gloves as she comes, lest her husband should blame her for keeping him if she staid to put them on in her room, your own carriage will creep away from the door, another will rush up, and before you have time to deny yourself, John a Nokes and Henry Stiles, will be ushered into the drawing room, where they will remain till the full flood of visitors sets in, never to cease for one minute till it is time for the last, and for yourself too, to go and dress for dinner. All this will happen on that particular day alone ; and if you let memory flit over the gulf of the last week, you will find that during each and all of the seven days preceding not one of your friends had ever thought of coming to see you, till you made up your mind to look at the Panorama of Thebes.

"My dear Helen," said Colonel Adair, going to the door of his daughter's room, as soon as Lacy and Mr. Snipes were gone ; "you have not been out for three days, and if you will get ready, I will take you for an hour to Hyde Park. You will be stifled with the smoke and closeness of this great city, if we go on thus."

Helen gladly promised to be ready directly ; but it was in vain that she kept her promise, for she had scarcely reached the drawing room, and Cononel Adair had scarcely taken up his hat, when Mr. Williamson was announced, and in walked a broad made corpulent man, neither very tall nor very short, but certainly very rosy in the face, with flat and somewhat unmeaning features, only enlivened by a pair of keen black eyes. His hair was short and grizzled, determinedly straight in all its lines, and yet not lying down flat, but standing up here and there especially upon the temples, with a sort of stiff rigidity which argued an obstinate disposition in the hair, at least, if not in the man. His air was peculiar, but it was an air easily acquired by successful country attorneys ; decided, bustling, not quite bullying, but something near it ; quite confident in his own

powers of ruling, directing, opposing, overcoming, and if necessary over-reaching any body with whom he might be brought in contact. In fact, it was the air of habitual success and petty authority : Mr. Williamson might have been under-sheriff of the county, for aught I know to the contrary.

The paunch which he carried before him added to his air, for though a man may have the air I mention without the paunch, yet the paunch superadded harmonizes well with the air. In his instance too, it accorded well with a certain assumption of frank bluntness which was very successful in establishing an imputation of honesty under which the attorney laboured in the country ; and it is but fair to say, that none but those persons who suffered under the sort of constitutional antipathies which some people have towards toads, butterflies, and cats, and by which antipathies they know that a toad, butterfly, or cat is in the room before they see it, ever supposed that Mr. Williamson was more or less than he seemed. Charles Lacy for one had a great antipathy to a rogue, and always seemed to feel himself uneasy when one was in the room with him, even if there was no appearance of rogue on the exterior. He did not like to sit long with Mr. Williamson, father, any more than he liked to abide with Mr. Williamson, son, but his objection was different in the two cases.

At present however as we have said, he was gone before the worthy gentleman made his appearance, and Colonel Adair received Mr. Williamson's shake of the hand, very cordially, notwithstanding that Lacy had said ; thinking, "I have known Williamson much longer than this quick and enthusiastic young man has done, and can judge of him well enough to feel sure that he can explain his conduct satisfactorily." Helen was a little more backward in returning his salutation, not that she doubted his honesty any more than that of her father ; but it was that there was a sort of instinctive apprehension of something disagreeable being about to happen in regard to herself and young Williamson, which made her shrink from all the family.

" Well, my dear Miss Helen," cried Mr. Williamson ; " well, my dear young lady ! as blooming and beautiful as ever, I see ! on my honour I don't wonder at all the broken hearts you have left behind you in the country ! I have not seen any thing half so pretty since you quitted us. But

we must inveigle you back again, eh, Colonel? Cannot we entice you, eh? I was quite surprised to hear that you were gone!"

"Why how could you think I would stay, Williamson?" demanded Colonel Adair. "After such an exposure and disgrace as I had been subjected to, you could not imagine that the neighbourhood could retain any very great charms for me, I am sure."

Nay, nay, you take it too seriously, my dear sir," replied the attorney; "though to tell you the truth, I would rather have cut off my right hand; yet what could I do, Colonel? when my Lord Methwyn ordered it, I was bound to obey, and you would make no offer you know—you would make no proposal which I could transmit to him."

"I had no offer or proposal to make," replied Colonel Adair, "except indeed that he should wait for his money, and that I did not choose to propose to any man. But tell me, Williamson,—Captain Lacy assures me that his father declares you must have greatly mistaken him, for he never gave any authority for the measures which were taken. I tell you the fact simply because I think you ought to know it; not that I either doubt your word, or suppose that you would act harshly or unkindly to one of my family."

"I should be the most ungrateful rascal in Europe if I did," replied Williamson, "but his Lordship very often forgets what he writes, and the worthy Captain you know, my dear Colonel, may wish a little to screen his father's reputation. But ask yourself, my dear friend, what motive I could have in exceeding my directions? Indeed I had every motive to do the contrary, and I confess that I did not go to the extent I ought to have done, in accordance with my legal duty and the orders I received. But the Captain of course, who is a younger man, and not quite so strict as his father, would endeavour to soften the matter."—Helen glided out of the room, and Mr. Williamson continued; "But, by dear sir, I think the proposal I sent you this day by my son, because I could not come so soon myself, was proof positive that I wished any thing on earth rather than to hamper or inconvenience you. Could I have commanded it, believe me I would have advanced at once the whole sum that you owed Lord Methwyn, and as soon as I could scrape the eleven hundred pounds together that you still owe, I sent my boy to offer it."

"I begged him to thank you, as such kindness deserved," replied Colonel Adair, "but to tell you that I had already made such an arrangement as rendered it unnecessary for me to accept it."

"Oh yes, he told me, he told me," replied Williamson, "he told me that Captain Lacy had lent the money, and that therefore you no longer needed it. I said, 'Damn it, he has never borrowed the money of the son of a man who sold off his whole stock,' I confess, at first: but after a little I thought it the best thing you could do."

Colonel Adair did not interrupt him, though he felt a great inclination, but when the other had done, he replied, "Your son, my good friend, made a great mistake, and suffered his imagination to interfere where he should not; Captain Lacy did not lend the money, neither did I ever seek to borrow of the son of a man who has treated me as Lord Methwyn has. I procured the money from another person, and am now ready to pay it into your hands as Lord Methwyn's agent, if you have a receipt."

"Oh yes, oh yes!" replied the lawyer, "I am always armed and well prepared, as the play-actor says," and thereupon he produced a large black leather pocket book from the yawning mouth of his pocket, and drawing out a stamp wrote thereon a receipt for eleven hundred pounds, which sum he received at the same time from the hands of Colonel Adair. "Well now, Colonel," continued the lawyer, while the money was in transit through his fingers and he was in the act of counting it, "well now, my dear Colonel, to give you the strongest proof in the world—five hundred and seventy—that so far from having one motive to—six hundred—seek to injure or embarrass you—six hundred and fifty—I have a proposal to make to you this very day—how the notes stick to my fingers—ha, ha, ha, a good sign! seven hundred—which will at once prove to you that—seven hundred and fifty—I have every inducement which parental affection—eight hundred—can afford, to study your interests and promote your fortune—eight hundred and fifty.—About six months ago—nine hundred—my son confided to me, that he had—nine hundred and fifty.—Very troublesome these small notes!—that he had conceived a deep, strong, and lasting affection for your daughter—a thousand—whom you know he has had so many occasions of seeing, and conversing with—a thousand and fifty—But

I said to him, Son, you had better wait till—one thousand, and ninety three pounds, eleven; quite right, my dear Colonel—wait till you have made some progress in the young lady's affection, and have some standing in the army, and by that time, I dare say that I shall be able to make you up such a little fortune as may enable you to propose with some chance of success. Now, my dear Colonel, I have been a tolerably fortunate man as you know, and I can very well afford to give my son—though ready money is scarce," he added, being much too shrewd a personage to forget that he had not been able to assist Colonel Adair, when Colonel Adair most needed assistance;—" though ready money is scarce, I can very well afford to give my son the little farm of Northwesterton, about eight hundred per annum, and perhaps in a year or two, may add something more, with the certainty of his having unencumbered full two thousand per annum at my death. Now, do not misunderstand me, my dear sir ! I am aware that you must think of the antiquity of your family, &c., that we are but mushrooms, and all that; and I hoped that my son might have had an opportunity of distinguishing himself in his profession, before he came to the point; but we cannot help seizing the present moment; because it must give you the strongest proof that our motives towards you are those of regard, and that to suppose I would—unless compelled by duty—do any thing even to annoy you, is as absurd, as to suppose that I would injure myself."

It would have been difficult even for a close watcher of the human face to have caught and analysed all the various shades of expression which passed over the countenance of Colonel Adair, as his ears were gratulated by this somewhat long speech from the lips of Mr. Williamson. There was certainly surprise: perhaps, pride too might for a moment cast a deeper shadow over his broad but furrowed brow. Then came other feelings to struggle with the last, growing out of the remembrance of all he had encountered through life, from the painful shackles of narrow circumstances, and the prospect of saving his daughter from similar miseries. All this—strengthened by the thought that the very means he was seeking for the purpose of raising himself from his present difficulties, might lead him to a grave, and leave her an orphan in the wide and lonely world—all this led him to listen with some degree of plea-

sure, to the proposal of the lawyer, which gave birth to a faint smile, which was almost as quickly extinguished by cold dislike to the young man himself. He had time however to let thought wander over all contingencies during Mr. Williamson's speech, which was not only long but slow; and when the lawyer had come to an end he answered a part of it though not the whole. "My dear sir," he said, "I feel that your conduct is an unanswerable refutation of every thing that can be said against you, in regard to the unfortunate affair between Lord Methwyn and myself; and in regard to family pride, you know at what expense I put my foot upon the head of that monster in former years, so that you may very easily imagine I should not suffer it to conquer me in my daughter's case, when I trampled upon it in my own. It is sometimes however a serviceable monster too, and the only things which I can conceive powerful enough to overcome it, are love—sincere and mutual love,—and individual worth and honesty. Now, the latter doubtless your son possesses"—and he made a bow,—"but have you any reason to suppose that the former exists between himself and my daughter?"

"I cannot tell that exactly; I cannot tell that," replied Mr. Williamson; "they have been a good deal together you know from their infancy, and that he loves her as ardently as any man can love, I can take upon myself to assert; but it would be presumption in me you know to suppose that he had gained the young lady's affections, before he had even asked them. However his regard for her is not at all of a common kind, I can assure you Colonel, and I do believe, which heaven forbid, that if he were to fail it would be the death of him. He is very diffident too—very diffident indeed, and all he asks on the present occasion, is to be permitted to pursue his addresses with your knowledge and approbation."

"Does he mean without Helen being aware of his proposal?" demanded Colonel Adair; "for, if she be once made acquainted with it you well know that she must and will without hesitation give her final reply at once. My daughter, Williamson, is not a person to trifle with any man for a single moment."

"Certainly not, certainly not," replied the lawyer, who, notwithstanding all that a tolerable store of family conceit could do, had shrewdness enough to suspect that his son

had not made a thorough conquest yet of Miss Adair's heart ; " but the boy is so diffident you see, Colonel," he continued, " and therefore he is desirous of pursuing his addresses to Miss Adair with your knowledge and approbation, but without speaking to her upon the subject, till he has had a farther opportunity of cultivating her regard, or of ingratiating himself with her, as I may say."

Colonel Adair rose, and took a thoughtful turn up and down the room, with a good deal of care in his fine gentlemanly countenance. At length he paused again, and replied, " Well, Williamson, I have no objection to the matter going on as it is, and your son having his chance : if he win my daughter's regard, so as to make her desirous to give her hand to him, I will not object, and nothing like family pride shall stand in the way. But remember I give no promise, and as I shall not open my lips upon the subject to Helen, it is from her your son must receive his final answer when he chooses to seek it. All I engage for is to make no opposition to his suit, if it be favoured by Helen."

" All I could wish ! all I could desire !" replied Mr. Williamson, who calculated much upon those powers, and accidents in favour of his son, which, in his own case, had rendered him a very successful man through life, " all I could wish, my dear Colonel ! and now with infinite satisfaction I shall leave the boy to make his own way as he can."

A few more commonplace words then passed between the two, and Mr. Williamson, who had a strong opinion that life was made for business, and that when business was concluded there was nothing else to be said, took his hat, and his leave, and rolled down stairs. Colonel Adair thought for a moment or two not very pleasantly of his Helen marrying young Williamson ; but then he remembered all the disinterested kindness which the father had displayed towards him, and gulping his distaste he opened the door, exclaiming, " Helen, Helen, my love ! are you ready ? we shall never get our walk in the park."

Helen came down immediately, and took up her gloves which she had left upon the drawing-room table, put the silk purse—which she had carried off with her, to net in her own room, while her father and Mr. Williamson talked of business—into the handsome workbox which we have before mentioned, and was in the act of turning the little silver key

thereof, when the roll of a carriage which was passing down the street ended in a rush and clatter at the door below, and then came one of those loud and bellowing knocks at the door which are not within the competence of any other fist than that of a London footman.

Colonel Adair and Miss Adair paused. They were the only lodgers in the house, but they were unacquainted with any body in London ; or, if the Colonel had acquaintances there, they were those of former years, sunshiny friends he thought, who would be little likely to spread their butterfly wings to see him, now that the cloud of adversity shadowed him, even if they knew where to find him, which it was impossible they should do now. "It is some mistake," he thought, and Helen calmly thought so likewise ; but still they stood ready to go out upon their expedition, as soon as these visitors by mistake should have discovered their error and driven away.

At length, however, the maid opened the drawing-room door. She was luckily at that moment in a state of unwonted tidiness, and Helen's eye glanced over her person with more satisfaction than usual as she announced, "Lady Pontypool, and Lady Mary Denham." At those names Colonel Adair's mind travelled through the record, and thought of the mighty change in him and his, which had taken place since last he had seen one, at least, of the persons now announced. He had been then in youth, if not in prosperity—but why should I say, if not in prosperity ?—He had been prosperous then, for he was happy : he was in possession of her he loved, and had a fund of satisfaction in the thought of having cast away family pride for her sake, and had as he deemed it an inexhaustible stock of joy in herself, and besides all that, a mine of wealth in rich hopes. He had competence too, and peace, and love ; and now youth was gone, the season of his days had changed, and winter was upon his brow, and in his heart ; the light of joy he seldom saw, and even the spring of hope was frozen over by the frost of years. Oh, it is ever a sad meeting with those we have known long ago in the bright and summer days of youth. So much must have fled, and so much must have changed, that even the glad recollection of early affection, runs a risk of being drowned in tears: but when, as in his case, every change has been for the worse, when fortune is lost, and those that brightened prosperity, and would have cheered adversity, are

gone too—when in the deprivation of worldly wealth, and youth's own peculiar stores, we stand alone in our old age, desolate and bereaved ; oh, how painful is the meeting with those who knew us in the gay and buxom days of youth, and strength, and happiness ! Colonel Adair glanced his eye round his poor lodging, and his head for a moment drooped forward, but the next instant he heard a step upon the stairs, and he turned his look upon his daughter, as she stood beside him in that native loveliness and inborn grace, which nothing can add to, and nothing diminish. He found pride and firmness there, and raising up his head to its full height, he advanced with an air of military ease to bid his noble cousins welcome.

Lady Mary had made Lady Pontypool go first, and that excellent personage walked up stairs rather slowly ; but when she entered the room, there was a kind and benevolent smile upon the old lady's countenance, which was worth a great many letters of introduction. Colonel Adair took her hand—it had been a fair white hand when last he touched it, but it was sadly wrinkled now—“Lady Pontypool, I am delighted to see you,” he said, “though it is many years since we met, and many changes have happened to us both.”

“Many indeed, cousin Adair,” she replied, “but we won't talk about such disagreeable things, if you please. I am very constant ; I love no changes, cousin.”

Lady Pontypool's speech gave Helen the first idea of the relationship between her father and their visitors, for Colonel Adair with the best sort of pride, seldom if ever mentioned any of his noble relations. The next moment however, a very lovely and fashionably dressed girl followed Lady Pontypool into the room, and passing round Colonel Adair and Lady Pontypool with calm ease, she took both Miss Adair's hands in hers, and with a gay but kindly smile, kissed her glowing cheek. “And so you do not know me, Miss Adair,” she said, still holding her hands. “Well, how should you now ? since you never saw me before in your life ; and yet we are cousins ; and I love you already with all my heart.”

There was something at the same time so gentle, so natural, so sincere in the way that she spoke, and Helen's heart had been so long struggling for her father's sake, to overpower all feeling of adversity, that those kind words

opened the magic fountain of emotions, and the tears swam in her beautiful eyes. "Nay, nay," continued Lady Mary, "my cousin Charles Lacy has been talking to me about you all the morning"—the blood rushed up quick into Helen's cheeks, and Mary, who thought within herself, "Well, she is certainly the loveliest creature I ever saw," went on to tell how she had discovered the relationship which Charles Lacy did not know. She spoke rapidly, for she had seen in a moment that every word concerning Lacy touched some chord of very quick vibration in Helen's heart; and, with the true female tact for all that relates to love, she hurried over the subject as fast as possible, to have done with it before Lady Pontypool and Colonel Adair had concluded the first periphrasis of recognition. She had scarcely got to the end however, and was establishing herself very fast in Helen's affections, when my Aunt Pontypool turned round and drew Colonel Adair's attention towards her by saying, "But you do not know my niece Lady Mary Denham, and as her mother was your second cousin too, she is your third cousin."

"Simply *cousin* if you please, Aunt Pontypool," replied Lady Mary; "do not you know that every one under the rank of an Earl's wife, takes only the title of *Lady*, and so all people under the relationship of brother and sister, take simply the title of *cousin*? So we will not count first, second, and thirds, if you please, Colonel Adair; but I will be simply your cousin Mary Denham, and if Helen here has no objection, we will reverse the order usual in genealogy, and being her father's cousin, I will be her sister. How it will puzzle the heralds, Helen, when they hear of it; but we will not mind that. Do you agree?"

"Oh, with all my heart!" answered Helen; "Captain Lacy was mentioning Lady Mary Denham as his cousin to-day, but I had no notion ——"

"That she was your sister," joined in Lady Mary—"it was very wrong of you, Colonel Adair, never to tell your daughter that you had other children."

"I am sure, had I known that I had such children as you, my dear young lady," replied Colonel Adair, "I should have felt but too proud in mentioning them; but I did not feel sure that they might like to recognize even a parent in poverty and adversity."

"Out upon all such children, or relations either," cried

Lady Mary ; "out upon all such as know any difference of regard, whether in prosperity or adversity. Out upon them, and fie upon them all!"

"I am sure you are not one of them Mary," added Lady Pontypool ; "for the more adverse have been my circumstances, the more attached to me did you and my poor sister seem to become, and now that I am quite dependent upon you, you treat me more as if you were dependent upon me."

"And she rewards me by saying something as disagreeable as that every day, 'Colonel Adair,'" cried Lady Mary. "My dear aunt, you are incorrigible. But, Helen, you have got on your bonnet and shawl ; are you going out, or have you just come in ?"

"My Father was going to take me to walk in the park," replied Helen ; "but it is of no consequence, I would really rather stay at home. I do not wish to go."

"But why should you stay at home ?" cried Lady Mary ; "I am going there too, you and your papa shall come with me. It will only save you a walk through the dull streets, and when we reach the park, we will get out and walk. He shall beau my Aunt Pontypool, and I will beau you Helen, and then I will show you all my lovers—such a menagerie of them ! but you must not run away with any from me, I cannot spare a single one for very vanity's sake."

Helen looked at her father for permission, but he was proud of his child, and he would suffer no other kind of pride to deprive her of the society and friendship of relations such as those who now sat beside her.

"Your carriage must be very capacious, or else we shall incommod you, Lady Mary," he said.

"Oh ! the carriage will hold a thousand when necessary," replied Lady Mary. "It is built partly on the model of Noah's ark, and partly on that of the sheriff of Middlesex's state vehicle ; and I can assure you it will incommod me much more if Helen and yourself do not come with us ; because I am so accustomed to be spoiled by all who come near me, and to do what I like with every one, that I do not know how I should behave the first time I was contradicted."

Colonel Adair made no farther opposition, and within ten minutes after Helen had first learned that she had two

noble and affectionate relations in London, she was seated with them in Lady Mary's equipage, and rolling on towards the park. As they went, Lady Mary applied herself industriously to make Colonel Adair forget a great many things, that might otherwise have come up unpleasantly to remembrance—first, to forget that he had never seen her before; and next, to forget that he was poor, and she was rich; and above all, to forget that any human creature could ever, by any possible stretch of folly, value another human being in proportion to his wealth. With Helen who had no knowledge of the world, Lady Mary Denham might well be successful at once, especially as Miss Adair could not help remarking a resemblance between her manners and those of Captain Lacy, though he was certainly more grave, and she more gay; but with Colonel Adair as a man of the world, the matter was of course more difficult, and yet Lady Mary's tact, in all kind-hearted policy, was so keen, and her demeanour, though gay as the song of the skylark, was so engaging, that with the old officer too she was perfectly triumphant. He felt that she was the kindest creature in existence; but he felt not that she was making any particular effort to be kind to him and his. It was all so easy, and so natural, and yet so ardent and so eager that it seemed as if they were conferring an obligation upon Lady Mary Denham, by giving her their society, rather than that she favoured them by seeking it.

When they had passed the little old milk house, which stood at the gate, near the top of Grosvenor Street, they left the carriage, and proceeded on foot with the servant following. Lady Mary and Helen walked somewhat faster than the Colonel and Lady Pontypool, and Miss Adair without intending to confess a word, or having the slightest idea that she was betraying any thing which she would have wished to conceal, was soon without one secret hid from the keen eyes of Lady Mary Denham. Happy was it for Helen, that the heart which directed those eyes, was as honest and true a heart as ever yet was, and as kind a heart too; but it is not impossible that the very intuitive perception of such being the case, did make Helen less upon her guard, than she otherwise would have been; and though she certainly had no idea of betraying herself as it was, yet had she had the slightest doubt of Lady Mary Denham's

good faith and kindness, she would have entrenched herself behind barriers which could not be passed. The way however in which she did betray herself was very natural, and was not brought about by any one question upon the part of Mary Denham, who, on the contrary, as soon as she began to talk of Charles Lacy, which was one of the first subjects she chose, had nearly all the conversation to herself. "And so, my dear Helen, you have known my cousin Charles a long time?" she demanded; "is he not a very charming creature?"

Helen blushed a little, but not much, and contrived to reply, "I always thought him very agreeable."

"Then I am sure you do not think him less so upon longer acquaintance," rejoined Lady Mary. "Do you know, my fair cousin, that all the world says I and Charles Lacy are going to be married to each other?"

For a single instant, all strength seemed gone from the limbs of Helen Adair, her cheek grew deadly pale, and she had nearly fallen; all that she had heard of the baseness and levity with which men can sometimes sport with a woman's heart, flashed across her mind during that moment; but the next, a strong abiding confidence in Lacy's honour and integrity, came back like balm to her heart, and the colour again mounted up to her cheek, glowing more and more warmly, as she felt, perhaps for the first time fully, from the emotions which she then experienced, how deeply and truly she loved him. Lady Mary too saw the outward effect of those emotions, the sudden paleness, and then the warm and brightening blush, too well to doubt what Helen's feelings really were; and sorry for having pained her, she hastened to bring comfort, thinking at the same time however, "It is well that I am not in love with Charles myself, for I should have a sad dangerous rival here, especially if she goes on blushing and turning pale with him in the same way she does with me."

"All the world says so, Helen," she proceeded aloud, with scarcely a break in the period she had begun with,—for all these mental operations on both parts occupied barely a second:—"All the world says so, Helen, but all the world is a great fool; and though you will hear it in twenty places, do not believe a word of it, my sweet cousin."

"No indeed I will not," replied Miss Adair, with such a tone of sincerity, that Mary had nearly been betrayed by

it into a smile at her simplicity. She went on gaily however, adding to what she had been saying before ; “ and so, Helen, as I do not intend to marry him myself, and have by no means settled amongst all my other friends, whom I shall honour in that way, I give you full leave and liberty to captivate and keep him to yourself, provided you are upon honour with me and do not attempt to steal any of my other guests and lovers.”

Helen smiled and blushed too, for there was matter for both in the agreement Lady Mary proposed. She felt very happy however, for, to hear such a thing, as her captivating and keeping to herself a being so noble and so charming as Charles Lacy, spoken of familiarly as the most natural event in the world, more impressed upon her mind the reality of her own situation in regard to him, than anything she had yet heard. All that had passed between herself and him in the morning,—Lacy’s own words, and her own feelings,—had been but like a happy dream, which wanted the tangible reality of waking things. Now however she went on to feel that it was true, and as she found all these emotions working in her heart, and went on to examine and consider them, she fell into a fit of musing, in which Lady Mary indulged her for a few minutes, and then roused her with some gay remark upon her thoughtfulness ; Helen blushed as she replied, but Mary did not press her unkindly, and thenceforth the conversation proceeded in uninterrupted cheerfulness, till it was time to return homeward.

CHAPTER XI.

If any one of my readers, fair or otherwise, can recollect—which is not probable—the events that took place some twenty years ago—though, by the way, any one who can recollect twenty years, should take his memory out of his pocket, and throw it in the fire if there be one in the room, or if not, put it into the coffee-pot amongst the grounds, or in short, get rid of it in some way, so that he may never see it more ; for it is a roll on which so many an unpleasant fact must be inscribed, so many a loved name must stand blotted with tears, so many an action must be recorded which can but call forth a sigh, a blush or a groan, that the hap-

piest and most virtuous man who ever lived—if he have a heart—can scarcely be supposed to examine with composure that long list of broken hopes, and banished expectations, and affections snatched, missed opportunities, faults, failings, follies, and regrets. Still, if any one can recollect the events which took place some twenty years ago, and will take the trouble of doing so, he or she, as the case may be, will remember what a tremendous bustle agitated London, during the time which in the little world of France, is emphatically called *the hundred days*. That bustle had been sighing up like the first beginning of a storm, during the two or three mornings which preceded the exact epoch whereat we have commenced this veracious history.

Although nothing positively was known, though no real information even of Napoleon's landing had been received, yet a thousand vague reports, a thousand wild and whirling rumours, had been busy in the London air. The great political barometer of the funds had been agitated in an extraordinary manner, announcing the coming storm; and at length, by the day at which our tale is now arrived, the wary crew of the vessel of the state, and the skilful mariners by whom she was then officered, were all in the bustle of active preparation, in order to put her in right trim to meet the fury of the tempest.

Manifold were the comings and goings in the streets of London. The offices at the Horse Guards were crowded to suffocation, the newspaper offices were besieged, the sound of every horn was listened for, and extraordinary gazettes were nothing extraordinary at all. We have already seen how Charles Lacy had passed one of those bustling days; and we have shown how they were passed by Colonel Adair and Helen; but those that followed were to be passed in a very different manner by all those persons. On the morning subsequent to that the events of which we commemorated in our last chapter, while Lacy was yet at breakfast, and before his father had made his appearance, two ominous-looking official packets were put into his hands, with a name written in the corner, which plainly indicated whence they came. The first which Lacy opened, was an order to join within a certain time, and his mind instantly wandered to the corner of Bond street, and thence to the corner of Grosvenor Place, with sundry speculations concerning can-teens and chargers, as he had not been in activity for nearly

a year, into all of which we shall not inquire. After he had thus pondered for a moment or two, he turned to the other packet, wondering what it could contain ; and, on breaking the seal, found within, a letter ; while the envelope displayed the following words :—“ Sir, I am commanded by his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief, to request that you would forward the enclosed to Lieutenant Colonel Adair, late of the _____ regiment, and now appointed to the command of the _____ regiment of _____ ; or, in case of his not being on the spot, transmit it to his agent. I have the honour to be,” &c.

“ Never does he fail to do a kind thing, in the kindest manner,” thought Lacy, as he reflected on the fact of the Duke’s sending the notification of Colonel Adair’s appointment to him, instead of transmitting it in the usual course. “ This will indeed be gratifying news to the veteran : but he must not remain in ignorance of it a moment longer than can be helped ;” and ringing the bell, he ordered his own servant to be sent to him directly. The man was not long in obeying his summons, and on entering the room he found his master in the act of writing a few hasty lines to Colonel Adair, begging him not to go out till he had seen him. “ We are ordered on active service, William,” said Lacy —the man bowed ; “ take that to the lodgings of Colonel Adair, Number — in _____ street, running out of Swallow street ;” the man bowed again. “ Then go to Tattersall’s, see what he has got that is likely to suit me, come back at one, and report !” said Lacy. The man bowed a third time, and went out ; and Lacy, turning back to finish his breakfast, looked into the dark coffee cup before him, wondering what might be the fate which Heaven’s wise will destined to arise for him out of the two letters that he had that morning received. He looked not in the coffee cup, it is true, believing that therein he could by any art discover from the grounds, those things whereon his mind was busy—though he turned it from side to side, and suffered the little particles of black dust which lay at the bottom to roll into a thousand different forms, exactly as if he had been performing the act of *coffeemancy* : but the truth is, every one, when the mind is peculiarly busy in any particular way, feels a natural desire to employ the body in some manner which has an occult similitude or association with the temporary occupation of the mind. How delight-

ful is it to the lawyer, when he is spinning a long argument, to have a bit of string between his fingers, if it be even the red tape which tied up his brief, and which he can twist round and round, and draw out and gather up, and ever and anon let it fall out of his right hand while he thumps the bar therewith, catching it with his left to prevent it from escaping ; but then how many fine associations are there between that act and the operation of his mind ? He thereby typifies the drawing out of his speech and the constant return of his arguments, and the twists and turns to which he has recourse, and the never letting go his point, but catching it on one side as soon as he loses it on the other ; and he also frequently illustrates the art of twisting the jury round his fingers in which he is at the moment occupied. Thus Lacy, while he rolled the coffee grounds backwards and forwards in his cup, and looked at them intently as they rolled, only revolved in like manner the many chances which might befall him from the events of that morning, and the many changes which fate might produce in the waves of the sand of time.

In the meanwhile, however, his servant proceeded on his errand, muttering to himself—" Colonel Adair ! Colonel Adair ! hum ! ha ! Colonel Adair !" and between Portman Square and Swallow Street, he had repeated over at least half a dozen times that some what insignificant concatenation of sounds, " Colonel Adair ! hum ! ha ! Colonel Adair !" When he came, however, to the street unto which his master had directed him, he looked at it for several minutes before he turned down, muttering—" It can never be here, surely !" but convinced at length that he was right, he proceeded to the number which he had been directed to seek, and after long contemplation of the house, knocked at the door. When it was opened his proceeding was somewhat singular, for instead of giving Lacy's note to the maid servant, he demanded to see Colonel Adair, and having been gratified in that request, delivered the note to his own hands, taking considerable note of the old gentleman's appearance, as well as of the furniture, &c. of the room. When he had done, he bowed and retired, and after he had reached the farther end of the street he muttered, " Colonel Adair ! hum ! ha ! Colonel Adair ! This puzzles me !" but he said no more, either to himself or any one else, and thence wended on his way to Tattersall's. What he there beheld did not

please him, and after taking a cursory glance into many a stall, he turned upon his heel and plodded his way back to Portman Square.

On his approach to the house of Lord Methwyn, he found his master on the step, as if he had been stayed in the very act of going out, by a tall, powerful man who was speaking to him. The servant paused at a respectful distance, and Lacy went on with what he was saying. "I am very sorry that I am going out," he said, "for I should have much liked, Mr. Green, to have heard all about your family. Can you call upon me about six this evening, when I shall certainly be home to dress for dinner?"

"Why, sir, you see I shall have a good deal to do," replied Adjutant Green; "though I am upon leave, yet I have a good deal of the regimental business to attend to. I never forget the regiment—and as we are likely soon to have some smart work, I take it I must look about me, for when first I was made an officer in his Majesty's service, I said to myself, says I, Now Green, if you are a gentleman as I take you to be, behave as such, and act according-ly—but I am only keeping you Captain Lacy. However, the matter is this, I have one or two things concerning the regiment, which will keep me for two or three hours; then I have to see my poor brother in the hospital, which any how will keep me two more, and then I promised my niece Lousia to try and get her a place, poor girl: for though I can manage to set up my sister in a shop when she gets well, and dare say she will get on, yet as she will have Bill the boy, and herself to provide for, I wish to make a diversion in her favour by getting Louisa a place as lady's maid, which she can do well enough, as she is a handy, tidy, little thing—always was."—

"Perhaps amongst my friends in London I can forward your views in that respect," said Lacy; "if so, Mr. Green, I need not tell you to apply to me without hesitation."

"I thank you, sir, I thank you," replied the soldier. "I always knew you were a gentleman, and inclined to act according-ly; but there is another gentleman here, somewhat older than you are, who has been a good friend to me when I needed one, and indeed has made great interest to get me on. I don't mean to say that interest did all; for if I had not done my duty, interest would not have done, but still without interest, perhaps duty would not have done either."

Howsoever, this gentleman might think me ungrateful if I applied to any one before him, and so if I can find him like, I will just speak to him first. Then, if I cannot find him, or he cannot help me about poor Loo, I'll apply to you Captain Lacy with all my heart, for I am quite sure that you are a gentleman, who will behave as such, and act according-ly ; though you see you are but a young gentleman to recommend a pretty little girl like Louisa, to a situation, and it might do her reputation no good, you know, sir."

Lacy smiled, though he could not but feel that there was a great deal of good sense in Adjutant Green's objection. " Well, Green, well !" he said, " my only object, you know, is to serve you, and I shall be very happy to do so, if I can ; but of course, I should not recommend your niece to any one who did not know me well enough to feel sure that my motives were right ones. So let me know the result of your application."

" That I will, sir, certainly," replied Adjutant Green, " and I only called to-day to tell you that my poor sister was a great deal better for the stuff the doctor sent her, and, also for good wholesome rations, and for being removed out of that wretched place, like. I won't offer to pay you back, Captain Lacy, the money you were good enough to give the poor soul before I came, for that would be petty pride, like, and not like a gentleman, as I dare say it did your heart good to give it, and much good may it do you still ; but I dare say you would like to hear what I did with those damned dogs, and cocks. Why, at first I was in so great a rage about them, to think that my poor sister had been starving, while they were fed, that I ordered the two sons of bitches to be tied together in a sack, and thrown into the Thames, and the two cocks to have their necks wrung, and be made into broth ; but as I got cooler, like, my sister, and Loo, and the boy all set to, and persuaded me to have them sold, and one fool of a fellow gave more than a hundred guineas for the lot. I remember when I was just such another ninny myself, but now I know better, and I have put by the money for my brother, so that if ever he gets out of bed again, there may be something before his hand. But I won't keep you any longer. So good morning, Captain."

" Good morning ! good morning, Green !" replied Lacy. " If you cannot come this afternoon, you will find me to-

morrow morning at this hour, almost to a certainty ;" and so saying, Lacy turned and walked away in the direction of Colonel Adair's little lodging. As soon as he was gone, his servant William, who touched his hat to him in passing, approached the door, which had been held open by the fat and grumbling porter, during all this confabulation between the young gentleman and Adjutant Green; and as he did so, William Newton who, as we have before said, was a calm, prudent, and taciturn personage, passed close by Adjutant Green, staring him in the face as he came near.

Green looked at him also, and for a moment seemed about to pass him with a true parade step, and utter unconsciousness of countenance, but suddenly something like a gleam of recollection kindled up in his eyes, and wheeling upon his right foot, just at the moment he was in line with Lacy's servant, he took him in flank with a volley to the following effect. "On my honour, I believe you are Willy Newton ! Come, come, Mr. Newton, that is not fair, to pass an old friend in that sort of way. 'Pon my honour, if I had not got you just in flank, and looked along the line just to see how your features dressed, like, I should not have known you ! And you to go and pass me, with whom you have played at skittles, and bowls, and all manner of things a thousand times ! That's not fair at all !"

"I did not know you might like my acquaintance," replied Newton. "You are Adjutant Green, and I am only Captain Lacy's gentleman. That makes a difference, you know."

"Not a whit," cried Green, catching at the beloved word gentleman, "not a whit. If you're a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such, and act accordingly. Do you suppose that I am one of those who forget old friends when they happen to be a little up in the world ? - No, no, Mr. Newton ! Those who do so deserve to go down again in the world—so say I—and you and I knew each other when we were boys like. But I thought you had gone ~~to~~ the army too after the old gentleman's death. The young fellow—who is an old fellow now by the way—promised he'd do mighty great things for us both : and I must say he kept his word with me, for whenever I did any thing worth noticing like, I had nothing to do but to write to him, and there was sure to come some step or another."

"He never did any thing for me in his life," answered Newton, "and I'll tell you more, Mr. Green, I never asked him, for I do not like him—I don't say much, but I don't like him—do you understand? I did go into the army sure enough; and he used to inquire about me, and promise me great things if I distinguished myself; but he never did any thing, though he and the lawyer got me to enlist by telling me that all his interest lay in the army—so when I found that, I never answered the lawyer's letters; and then I was reported killed at Busaco, though I was but severely wounded; but I held my tongue, for I had no one to care about me; and then Captain Lacy chose me for his servant, and I'm very well off—but I don't like that fellow we were just talking about—I would not have any thing from him for a great deal: but I don't want it, thank God. I am very well off now-a-days."

"But what makes you think so ill of him?" demanded Green, "I'm sharp enough in general, and I never saw any harm in the man. Other folks used to say he was miserly-like and avaricious, but he gave me fifty guineas to start me like a gentleman."

"Why what made him so keen then to get you and I to go into the army?" demanded Newton; "he never rested, nor the lawyer either, till we had touched the king's gold, and were off for India. What made him do that, think you, Mr. Green?"

"Why he told me," replied Green, "that it was all because his interest lay that way, and because he could do more for me there than any where else; and so he has."

"But I do not well see why he should care so much about us," replied Newton; "why should he care for us more than for the other servants of his grandfather? You had only been what they called steward's clerk for a year, and though I had been longer in the family, I was but a boy. There was something under it, Mister Green, and if you will come in and take a glass of wine, I will tell you something that puzzles me—that is to say, if you are not too proud."

"Proud! What have I to be proud of?" rejoined the soldier; "so I'll come in with all my heart, for I was just going to ask him to do something to get Louisa my niece into a family; but if he's a rascal, I would rather hear it first, for then I won't go. I'll have nothing to do with

rascals, for I always say to myself—if you're a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such, and act according-ly."

" You may save yourself the trouble of going to look for him," answered Newton, " for he is not in town, I can tell you ; and as for your niece, you had better speak to Captain Lacy about her. Get him to talk to his cousin, Lady Mary,—to whom folks say he's going to be married, but I say not,—get him to speak to her, and the business will be done in a twinkling."

" Thank you, thank you!" answered the other, " the Captain offered just now, but I thought, he's so young, you see ; and yet he's quite a gentleman, I know ; but I will speak to him again, for I am sure one may trust him any how."

" That you may, that you may!" answered the servant ; and thus having shown that Lacy was a hero even to his valet de chambre, we shall leave the two to find their way in through the door of Lord Methwyn's house, which the porter,—who with the true dignified pride of servants did not choose to wait upon his fellows,—had left ajar, in order to resume his own place in his proud leathern chair, and read in the newspaper the events and opinions of the day. Here, however, let me remark, that had he not known he should have been obliged to rise again to open it, the porter would willingly have banged to the door upon Mr. Newton and his friend ; for next to the butler and the groom of the chambers, there was no one upon earth whom the porter detested so much as a valet de chambre. Oh how we all hate the grade just above" us ! Let legislators remember that to do so is human nature, and beware of the barriers they break down.

CHAPTER XII.

Now shall we follow Charles Lacy, or shall we not, to the house of Colonel Adair ? Shall we relate all that occurred in consequence of the letter which the young officer brought, notifying the appointment of his friend to active service—the unfearing joy of the veteran, the more mingled feelings of his child, and the thanks which both poured forth upon Lacy ? Then shall we enter minutely into all

the considerations, and all the preparations with which the news he had just received, burdened the shoulders of Colonel Adair? Or shall we tell of how, in the joy of his heart, and the prospect of renewed fortunes, he consented to accept an invitation to dinner, from Lady Mary Denham; and how Lacy, at his cousin's house, passed one of those sweet tranquil evenings by the side of her he loved, which chequer with bright, yet tender light, the varied—sadly varied—board on which the game of human life is played? No, no, no? we will tell nothing of the kind, positively nothing. Boccaccio's lake is ploughed over, and bears the olive and the vine; the bed of the Mugnone lies dry amongst its reeds; and love, like its poet's dwelling-place, has but little interest for the generation of to-day; and were I to write of the packing of the piston of a steam engine, or of veins of segregation in the bowels of the earth, I should excite far more tender feelings in the bosoms of my readers, than were I to write either with the fire of Boccaccio or the extravagance of Chateaubriand on so dull and hackneyed and ideal a thing as love. Besides, dear reader, we have enough to do without wasting our time in such idle gossip as the feelings of two lovers, and henceforth to the end of the third volume we will never mention one word of love, —if we can help it.

Now then, let us turn to the third day after Colonel Adair had received the tidings of his appointment: premising, that during the interval, both he himself and Lacy had accomplished a great many of those preparatory pieces of business, which seem so interminable and insurmountable when contemplated from the beginning; but which are, in fact, so soon despatched when we set about them with real good will. Lacy had bought his horses and arranged his baggage, and settled his accounts with his agents, and had remodeled his will, and waited on the Commander-in-chief, and done a great many other things, all very proper to be done, but unnecessary to be mentioned; and Colonel Adair, with all his old habits coming to his aid, had accomplished far more than he had expected. There was one thing however which embarrassed him; and which, turn it which way he would, consider it in every light he could think of, look at it under all points of view, he could not arrange to his satisfaction. That point was, what he was to do with his daughter while he himself was on the continent;—for

be it remarked, by this time it was determined and very well understood, that Napoleon was to be met in the outset of his new career ; and even the particular spot of earth on which the great approaching struggle was to take place, was easily divined by every officer of experience. ' Far be it from me to say, that any man,—or if there was any man, it was but one,—knew that on the precise field of Waterloo must be fought the battle between ambition and mankind ; but every one of any knowledge in the art of war clearly foresaw that the Rhine, the Ocean, and probably the Meuse, would limit the struggle which was to decide the fate of Europe. Colonel Adair, as a good and scientific officer, was in no doubt as to this point ; and as he felt no doubt either of the success of the British arms, he more than once thought of taking his daughter with him to Belgium, where the king of France still remained, and leaving her at Ghent or Bruges, while he was in the field. The difficulties and dangers of her orphan state however, the vague indistinct perception of painful chances in a foreign land, the loneliness of her hours, and the anxieties of her heart, while he was absent, made him pause : and often, full often in the course of the succeeding days, would he gaze at her as she sat at work beside him, with a look of painful love, full of doubts, and apprehensions, and embarrassments.

One day, however, after he had been absent during the greater part of the morning, he returned with an air of satisfaction, and told Helen, that he had been calling upon their worthy friend Williamson. " He is a kind good fellow !" added Colonel Adair ; " though his birth and early education render him of course a little rough and perhaps vulgar. He offered me his purse and his services as far as they would go in my new expedition ; but, thank God, Helen, as matters stand at present, we want neither the one nor the other ; though I know few men whose assistance I would more willingly accept ;—except indeed Lacy's ; for about him there is that gentlemanly tone of mind and feeling, that of all men on earth, he is the one to whom I would most willingly pay the compliment of being under an obligation. But to return, my dear child. Williamson has in some degree relieved my mind about you.—I was anxious for your comfort during my absence, Helen ; but he has charged me in his own, and his wife's name, to give you

an invitation to their place at Marsmore during the whole period which duty will detain me abroad."

Helen changed colour, and the tears almost rose in her eyes as she exclaimed, "Oh, my dear father, I hope you have not accepted this invitation! Indeed, indeed, I cannot!"

"But what is your objection, my dear child?" demanded her father; "you know that his wife, who is a good motherly kind of woman enough, will be very glad to see you, and his daughters also; and you have too much dignity of heart, my dear Helen, to mind the little airs of assumption which they give themselves."

"Oh, it is not that, papa," replied Helen, "though that is not pleasant; but I hoped and expected that I was to go with you, especially if the army went to Flanders."

"My dear child, I am afraid you have not calculated at all, on the inconveniences and discomforts of the course you wish to pursue," replied her father. "I have not, it is true, accepted Williamson's offer; telling him, that it was yourself who must decide; but before you ask me to take you with me, remember that it can be but for a very small part of the way. I must then leave you alone in a foreign town; and perhaps during the whole of the rest of the war, may see as little of you as if you were in England. Besides, my dear girl, suppose, only suppose,—that we were defeated, what would become of you? and what an additional weight it would be upon my mind, to know that you were in a country overrun by the enemy?"

Helen looked sadly down upon the ground for a moment or two, and then raising her eyes with a look such as only can pass between a daughter and her father, she answered, "Well indeed, my dear father, I will never ask you to do any thing for me that may be an additional weight upon your mind, burdened as it already is. But indeed I cannot go to the Williamsons;" and her cheek glowed a good deal as she spoke. "Have you not observed," she continued, "that that young man, John Williamson, always puts on a particular manner towards me, which is very disagreeable?"

"But where could I place you, Helen, while I am away!" demanded her father; "and besides, he too will of course be absent with his regiment."

"Better take me with you than place me there, indeed,

"my dear father," replied Helen; "for though he might as you say be absent, yet I could not go there without giving encouragement to views I am afraid he entertains. Indeed, you had better take me with you."

Colonel Adair mused: but ere he could reply, the maid announced Lady Mary Denham; though—owing to her, the maid's, having been at the street door, studying cosmography in the usual manner wherein it is studied by female servants, at the moment that young lady arrived,—no knock announced her coming, and she was nearly in the room, following the maid's notification, before either Helen or her father were aware. Now I have noticed the fact of Lady Mary Denham's abrupt entrance, because Helen,—who, certainly for particular reasons of her own, was most wonderfully disinclined to favour Mr. and Mrs. Williamson with a visit at Marsmore,—was agitated considerably from opposing a wish of her father's, for the first time in her life. Now, people who are liable to be agitated, should always live on the first floor; because, what between the knock at the street door, the slowness of all people whose business it is to open street doors, and the time necessary to mount the stairs in a fat, slow, gentlemanly manner—oh, how I hate those thin dear friends who run up three steps at a time—one has fully sufficient time to compose one's-self, and get rid of sparkling eyes and eager looks, or burning cheeks, as the case may be. Helen and her father, as has been shown, did live on the first floor, but that precaution had been defeated, as we have seen, by the cosmographical studies of the maid-servant; and Lady Mary was in the room before the agitation was half off Helen's countenance. Mary might for a moment look surprised, and although that look vanished in a moment—like all other well-bred looks, never making a long visit,—yet Colonel Adair did catch a glance of it *en passant*, which made him say at once, after the first salutation was over; "Here is Helen, Lady Mary, endeavouring to persuade me to do the thing of all others I long to do, at the expense of reason and prudence, namely, to take her with me to the wars—as far at least as I may be permitted to do so."

Now the mind of Mary Denham, as we have before endeavoured to show to the wise and sententious reader, was a quick and apt mind, and her heart a tender and considerate heart; and the heart had too well revolved, and too long

dwelt upon the situation of Colonel Adair and his daughter, or the mind not at once to run over, in the present instance, a thousand difficulties and embarrassments, in regard either to taking Helen or leaving her, although she was not aware that the difficulties were still more complicated by the loves of John Williamson. But Mary, however, as usual with her, when she saw an embarrassment, and knew her power, hastened to bring relief; and she consequently replied—

“ Utterly impossible, Colonel, that you can take her ! My dear Helen, do not think of such a thing ! ” Helen looked mortified, and Lady Mary continued ; “ I tell you, my dear cousin, it is impossible—as much impossible as it is to be in two places at the same time ; simply because I have determined positively that you shall spend the whole period of your father’s absence with me, whether you will or not ; and whatever I have determined always comes to pass, so make up your mind to the disappointment.”

The sun shone out on Colonel Adair’s high forehead, for though he would no more have done an act of rudeness to Mr. Williamson than to any one else, yet he knew that from what had passed between them in regard to the son of that personage, he had a very sufficient excuse for preferring the dwelling of Lady Mary Denham to Marsmore, as a residence for his daughter ; and that, too, without hurting in any degree the pride of the inviter, or appearing to court the lady of rank, and slight the attorney.

Helen, however, who remained in blessed ignorance of Mr. Williamson’s formal proposal, felt the matter more difficult, and consequently replied with a wistful but somewhat sorrowful look, (expressing fully what was going on in her heart, namely, the desire to accept Lady Mary’s invitation, but the fear of being obliged to decline it,) “ I am afraid my father has already received another invitation for me if I do not go with him.”

On this, as on many other occasions, the words were merely the text ; it was the look which was the sermon. The true definition of language—at least as it is used in this world—was given by some one—though I forget by whom—when he said that language was bestowed upon man for the purpose of concealing his feelings ; and, strange and sad is the fact—showing both how imperfect is the instrument called language, and what a double-dealing beast

man is, that when the brightest and the best of us use it for the reverse of the purpose to which it is usually applied, and employ it to express our real thoughts, a whole volume of commentaries in looks and gestures is necessary to convey any idea of our true meaning. The temple of Delos, and the cave of Trophonius, never gave forth such equivocal oracles as a pair of coral lips. Helen, however, answered truly, and her looks and words tended to the same purport; though it must be confessed, the looks went much farther, saying; "I should like very, very, very much indeed to stay with you, if I must not accompany my father; but I am afraid this prior invitation renders it impossible for me to do so."

Lady Mary, who read it all, and in whom the first interest in her young connection's unfortunate situation was growing fast into real affection, was determined by her looks to take no denial. "If your father has accepted any invitation from a more distant relation than myself," she said, "I shall not only be very much affronted, but shall annul it by my prerogative royal; and if it be from a relation as near or nearer, I shall claim my share or proportion of your time as a matter of right, and putting in my title to be first served, will take possession of you at once. Then let any one get you from me if they can, my dear Helen.—So, Colonel Adair, I beg you to be reasonable, for I am determined to be unreasonable; and if one of the party do not keep fast their common sense, we shall never come to the end of the matter."

"I have accepted no invitation for Helen as yet, my dear young lady," replied Colonel Adair with a smile, and laying some emphasis upon the word *accepted*; "I have only *received* one, and I am happy to say that there are many valid excuses to be assigned for declining it, which can give no offence. She is quite free therefore to accept that which you are so kind as to make her, if she do not adhere to her wish of accompanying me, which I trust her good sense will prevent her from doing."

Helen looked at Lady Mary, and then at her father, from whom she could remember no separation, though he had of course been absent during a great part of her infancy. "Lady Mary will I am sure forgive me," she said, "if I confess, my dear father, that I would rather be with you wherever you are, than any where else in all the world;

but you have told me that it would only be an additional weight upon your mind, that I must be separated from you during the greater part of the campaign, if not altogether, and you appeal to good sense. Thus then, my dear father, I will leave it to you to decide for me, knowing my feelings as you know them, and the circumstances by which we are surrounded far better than I can do."

"Well then, my dear Lady Mary," said Colonel Adair, "frankly and thankfully I accept your invitation for my dear child. I see and understand your kind and generous feeling towards her, and the blessing of a father who leaves her with comparative happiness in your society, will not, I am sure, be less valuable to Lady Mary Denham, because that father is neither rich nor powerful."

The tears came up into Lady Mary's eyes as she returned the pressure of Colonel Adair's hand; and then turning to Helen who was weeping too, she kissed her cheek to hide a drop or two that began to run down her own. "Well then, my dear Helen," she said, "you are my own till your father comes back again at least. Is it not so?"

"Yes, if you wish it," replied Helen, drying her tears, "and I can assure you, Lady Mary, that during that time I would rather be with you than with any one else."

"Indeed, Helen!" said Lady Mary, looking into her eyes with a smile which made the rosy blood mount rapidly into Helen's cheeks, "indeed! then I am flattered! But, my dear Colonel, I shall not be satisfied unless I can persuade you to come down before you set out, and spend a day or two with me at a little place I have in Sussex, just to settle Helen in her new abode, where we shall live like widows till you return again. I expect a very few of my old friends of my poor father's to be with me, and amongst them perhaps you may find some old friends of your own—at least so my Aunt Pontypool thinks—it is not far from the sea, and not near so far from the port where you must embark as London. So I will take no refusal."

"Indeed I cannot promise," replied Colonel Adair, "it must entirely depend upon circumstances. The Commander-in-chief has most kindly given me some time ere I join, in consideration of all that I have to do, in consequence of having been so long on half pay; but at last levée he intimated to me that it was necessary to make my prepara-

tions with all speed, as he could not extend my leave without inconvenience to the service. I have already got through a great deal in a short time; and if the rest goes as smoothly, I may have two or three days to spare, but I would fain be with the regiment a short time before the period specified, both to show my gratitude for the favours held out, and to set the other officers and soldiers an example of that alacrity and activity which I shall expect, and which the service requires."

"Well, well! we shall see," replied Lady Mary, "and now having walked here for this express purpose, I must walk back again, satisfied with the victories I have just gained, and not risking my success by farther rashness; is not that good generalship, Colonel Adair? Oh, Helen, I forgot to tell you, I have got the nicest little maid for you in the world. Her name is Louisa Green, and I am sure she will give you satisfaction, for she is in love with my cousin Charles Lacy, and in fact is his choice and recommendation." Helen blushed again and again, and Lady Mary went on. "But to be serious. She herself and her whole family were saved by Charles from misery and distress—for I am sure you know that he is the most generous and kind-hearted of human beings."

"That I am sure he is," said Colonel Adair; "That I am sure he is," echoed Helen in her heart, but it did not reach her lips.

"And besides being generous and kind-hearted," Lady Mary proceeded, "he is careful and prudent, and knows a good deal of the world. So after having saved this poor family from actual starvation, he found out that their nearest relation was a very gallant soldier, who distinguished himself so much in the Peninsula, that he was raised from the ranks. They had been all formerly in a better station of life; and as the uncle, though he could do a great deal for them, could not support them all, it was determined to seek a place as lady's maid for the girl, who has had a good education. Lacy applied to me, and as I had a maid of my own, I took the poor girl to do nothing or any thing as it happened—and oh, Helen! if you could but hear her talk about Charles's coming in on that opera night, and sending for a surgeon for her mother, and giving them all food, and life—oh, Helen, Helen!"

Now whether Lady Mary, in thus openly coming upon

such dangerous subjects with Helen Adair in the presence of her father, supposed that he was aware both of the feelings of Charles Lacy towards his daughter, and the daughter's feelings in return, or whether she calculated upon the proverbial blindness of parents upon such occasions, or whether she forgot herself, I will not take upon myself to say ; but certain it is that, as soon as she was gone, after speaking as we have recorded, Colonel Adair calmly remarked, "Lady Mary seems to feel all that one can wish towards her cousin ; for I am sorry to say, such affection and esteem between two people in their situation, and in that rank of life, are not to be found invariably. You know, my love, that as far as general report goes, they are to be married after the present campaign."

Helen thought not, but she only replied, that she had not heard the report ; and her father and herself, without any farther observations on that theme, turned to consider what preparations were necessary ere she could take up her abode with her cousin. To a person in the circumstances of Colonel Adair, it might not be always very convenient to make those preparations in the style which the society wherewith Helen was about to mingle required ; especially when he had his own equipment also to provide for, ere he could return to active service. But the truth was, Helen was already better prepared than might have been expected ; for Colonel Adair—always seeing before him the certainty of the large sums he had laid out upon his farm producing an adequate return,—and never supposing that he should be suddenly deprived of the means of pursuing the occupation he had chosen, at the very moment when he was about to reap the fruits of his exertions,—had invariably taken particular care that his daughter should maintain the appearance of that rank in life, in which his family entitled him to class himself ; and with a degree of pride which was not unnatural, he sought to prevent her from feeling any of the inconveniences which attend upon an inferior station. He had not been extravagant ; but a much larger portion of that which he had a right to consider was his well-assured income than he devoted to any other purpose, he assigned to Helen for her own particular expenses ; and as she herself had both taste and judgment in her dress, she contrived to make that sum go much farther than many another would have done. She was never, indeed, what is called smart or fine.

Her beauty did not need it, and her air rendered whatever she wore graceful ; but she was always better dressed than any one in the neighbourhood, though certainly more economically than many ; but the secret was—she was dressed with taste. Those who used to envy and admire, confounding at the same time her personal loveliness with her apparel, did, it is true, as soon as misfortune fell upon her family, declare loudly, and promulgate generally, that Miss Adair's extravagance and her dress had been the ruin of her father, and used to pity him, poor man, very much ; but the wife of the rector, and one or two other women of quiet good sense and calm virtues in the neighbourhood, uniformly defended the conduct of Helen Adair, and took upon themselves to declare that, from their own personal knowledge, there never was a human being less inclined to extravagance than herself. Helen escaped one uncomfot, by in no degree anticipating such accusations ; feeling so completely innocent of every expensive habit, or extravagant wish, and so unconscious of having been better dressed than other people, that she never fancied they could then have envied, or would now abuse her. At all events, she was excessively well satisfied that her former regular provision and careful management of her dress, now enabled her to assure her father that she should want little or nothing for her proposed visit. Every thing that absolutely belonged to her, had been spared by the myrmidons of the law, under the direction of Mr. Williamson ; so that besides her own personal apparel and a number of ornaments, which the kindness either of her father, or of her early friends, had bestowed upon her, she possessed a very handsome set of jewels, which on his marriage Colonel Adair, in the fulness of early hope and confidence, had given to her mother. He had himself left the spot which had so long been his home with only two hundred pounds, saved from the wreck of his fortunes ; a considerable part of this had already been expended in different ways ; and as he thought over various matters he might yet have to defray, he looked somewhat wistfully at Helen, saying, “ I am afraid after all I shall have to leave you but very poor, my love ; and in a house like that to which you are going, there are always a great many claims upon you. But I trust soon to send you more, Helen.”

“ You must neither leave me any thing, nor send me any

thing for a long time, my dear father," said Helen, smiling brightly up in his face, with one of those looks that speak hope and convey hope; "I shall have quite enough, depend upon it."

"Oh you do not know, you do not calculate all the calls upon you, my dear child," replied her father; "but I must think for you in these matters, my Helen."

"But indeed I do know, and I do calculate," replied Helen. "I dare say before you come back, I may need fifty or sixty pounds. Is that extravagant enough?"

Colonel Adair smiled. "And where are you to get it, Helen," he said, "if I do not send it?"

"Why from this she replied, laying her hand upon the very handsome piano, which occupied a considerable space in the room. "You know, papa, I bought it myself with what I saved out of my allowance; and how could I employ it so well as in selling it again, to spare you any additional expense at the moment you have so many, and when you are just going to strive for a fresh fortune. Lady Mary has plenty of such instruments, depend upon it; and I have heard her talk of the music room, so that I shall want nothing of the kind; and I shall be so happy in being able to do without taking any thing from you, that it will be the most delightful saving I ever made."

Colonel Adair kissed her warm cheek, saying, "You are a dear good girl, and may God bless you, my Helen;" but he did not oppose, and thus the matter was settled.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BEAUTIFUL day——Oh, that lovely thing! that smile of universal nature! that enchanting delusion! for whether the phenomenon of light be produced by the propulsion of infinitely small atoms in right lines from the sun, or be occasioned by the undulations of a rare medium—whether the theory of Newton or of Huygens be correct, no doubt can exist that the appearances of all the loveliness exposed by light are but delusions, and that we see not, nor really comprehend the objects which cause us so much pleasure.——

A beautiful day, lighting up tower and town, and hill and

dale had set in, completely changing the aspect of all the world by the magical effect of light—for if the reader comes to consider what every object is to him without light, how dull, and dark, and black is the indistinct mass of the loveliest thing seen by even a faint light—how robbed of all its charms is the prospect when he comes home at night just after the twilight is gone, and before the moon has risen—how much of imagination there is even in the picturesque beauty that remains—how completely it is that memory and fancy supply the colours, and fill up the spaces, and draw the lines which he fancies he sees in that dim hour—how perfectly his nearest relations would be strangers to him in the dark, if he had no other means of discovering them than with his eyes—if he remember all this, he will perceive that it is upon the light alone that depends his sensation of picturesque beauty.—

A beautiful day, lighting up tower and town, and hill and dale, had set in, completely changing the aspect of all the world by the magical effect of light;—I am not going to be paradoxical any more—but Colonel Adair and his daughter Helen, as they rolled down towards Alton, one of the country seats possessed by Lady Mary Denham, there was wanting that other kind of light, that light of the heart, the sunshine of happiness, without which the loveliest day is as dark and gloomy, as cold, and leaden, and lifeless as the world without the presence of the sun. So now you see, my dear reader, that all my long lectures upon the nature of light had an object, and a tendency; for unless the soul be illumined with the calm light of cheerful satisfaction, all that is lovely at other times, is dim and cheerless, just in the same manner as nature is so when the vivifying ray is absent.

No one could enjoy the aspect of nature, no one could rejoice in the glorious works of God, beaming in the effulgence of his crowning gift, with more ardour than Helen Adair. Nature had planted the feeling in her heart, and her father had taken care to direct, and improve it; but that father, now sitting by her side, was about to go forth to battle and to danger, to quit her for the first time for many years, to quit her perhaps never to return; and Helen's thoughts were of him and not of nature. It was not indeed that she did not see the beauties of the scenery through which she passed, or think, 'how lovely it was!' nor that

the constant change from the near home-scene of cottage, and wood, and village church to the wide open view over hill, and dale, and plain, which took place as they rolled rapidly up and down the gentle slopes upon an English high road, or wound round the sides of the hills, did not call her attention, or excite her admiration; but it was that in her bosom a feeling of melancholy and apprehension—the continual presence of consciousness of coming grief, mingled with all, and tinged the whole with sadness.

On his part, Colonel Adair strove to be gay and cheerful; and manly fortitude mastered all expression of other feelings; but to a daughter's eye there were a thousand little traits which shewed that he was often thinking of subjects different from those on which he spoke—that his heart was as busy as his mind, though he would not suffer its workings to appear—and, in short, that his gaiety was the effect of effort, not of nature or of habit. It is true indeed that his appointment to active service had wrought a beneficial change in all Colonel Adair's feelings; had banished a certain degree of irascibility which had been creeping over him under his misfortunes; had restored to him, if not that buoyancy of heart which he had possessed as a young man, at least that firm and equal temper of mind which neither scorns dangers, nor contemns reverses, but which prepares to confront both without flinching or murmuring. He had re-acquired hope and confidence—if he lived, there was every prospect of being able to pay off the sum which he had been obliged to borrow, and if he died in the service of his country, his daughter would be at least provided for. It is certainly a hard thing to begin life again at sixty, but still it was a relief from the oppression of mind under which he had before laboured, and the veteran met the fate without a sigh. He had become therefore from the very moment that he knew of his appointment far more placable and good humoured: those things which would have irritated his pride, and called forth perhaps a tart reply, now passed him by without notice, and acts of kindness, which in his misfortunes he might have rejected for fear of degrading himself, he would now accept with manly cheerfulness in his better situation. He was happy to have a career open before him, and he tried as he drove along by the side of his daughter to console himself by thinking of his good fortune in these respects, and to be as gay as possible for her sake;

but still he felt the parting from her as a father and a man, still he was conscious that a dim and doubtful fate was before him, still he knew that the moments he was then passing beside her were possibly—nay probably, the last.

In the good old time a father situated as Colonel Adair then was, might have found it, or thought it expedient to give his daughter a word of good advice, in regard to her conduct and demeanour in the society in which he was about to leave her: but Colonel Adair did not feel it to be at all necessary. He had given her a good education—he had educated her heart, and had fixed it in those principles on which circumstances have no effect. He felt sure that his Helen could never go wrong without knowing it, and equally sure that she would never know it and go wrong. His charges to her therefore, and his directions were very few, and the principal desire he expressed was, that if by the chance of war she was deprived of his advice, either permanently or temporarily, when she was in any difficulty to apply to Dr. and Mrs. Bellingham, as the two persons on whom he could most rely. "And at all events, my dear child," he continued, "If I should die—for these things are alone in the hand of God—write immediately to Dr. Bellingham, tell him your exact situation at the time, without hesitation or reserve, and beg him, as your father's old and good friend, to counsel you how to act."

Helen promised to obey, and as she did so, a few tears dewed her cheeks; but she dried them as soon as possible, and carefully banished every thought that could give rise to more; for she had determined to struggle with every feeling, and repress every expression of grief, in order not to add one additional pang to those she knew her father would feel in leaving her. She feared not in the least that he would misunderstand her, or believe that the emotions she concealed did not exist, for at her mother's death she had done the same, and had conquered the outward expression of her grief, in order to console and support the parent that was left; and she had seen and known since, that her father perceived, and appreciated, and was grateful for the restraint she had put upon herself at a moment of the bitterest sorrow.

The space of three days was all that remained of the time which Colonel Adair had allotted to his own prepara-

tions, ere he took the command of his regiment. The leave granted to him by the Commander-in-chief, indeed, was not yet expired ; but he had explained to Helen the motives under which he acted, in voluntarily abridging his stay, and she knew him too well to suppose that it would be protracted. Nor, indeed, did she wish it, for although with true clinging of a woman's heart to the bright moments of the present, every instant of his society was valuable to her, yet she felt that he was doing what was honourable to himself ; and her father's reputation was dear to her—far dearer than her own pleasure in his society. At length the day of their journey drew towards a close, the last stages had seemed long, and the horses had appeared to go more slowly—a sure sign of weariness in those within the curious rolling boxes that carry us about the world.

"I wonder if it is much farther," said Helen, towards six o'clock ; "I do not know why, but I am more tired than usual."

"It cannot be much farther," Colonel Adair replied, "for we have just passed the seventy mile-stone, and it is only at the distance of seventy-two from London." As they spoke, the horses were drawing the carriage slowly up one of the Sussex hills, with high sandy banks topped with a crowning mass of verdant shrubs, and broken by patches of green turf and flowers on either hand ; and in the cool shade of the woods round about, the coy blackbird was singing his afternoon song, full, and round, and melodious, but somewhat touched with melancholy, like the feelings of both father and daughter at the moment. Colonel Adair looked out of the window of the carriage, and as he gazed upon the sweet quiet scene which presented itself, he murmured, "Old England, dear old England!" It was his only comment, but it gave a clue to the thoughts which were passing in his heart ; and who—who is there that has left this dear peculiar land, this land of home-happiness, and beautiful tranquillity, doubting he ever may return again, and has not sighed like him, at every one of the few last looks that one takes of dear old England! The carriage reached the top of the hill in about five minutes, and the postilion paused a moment to let his horses breathe, and to mount into the saddle. He did it slowly, looking round him at the time as if he had some feeling for the picturesque—a thing, be it remarked, that postboys seldom have ; for, whether that

feeling be situated in the head or the heart—whether it consist of an intricate analysis of the component parts of a beautiful whole, carried on instantaneously by a peculiar process of the brain—or is a mere simple uncompounded sensation of the heart, produced perhaps by particular rays of light reflected from the objects before us to the optic nerve, thence carried to the sensorium, and there taken into the composition of the nervous fluid, which, mingling with the venous blood in its passage back to the heart, produces a peculiarly thrilling and stimulating effect upon that organ—whatever, in short, the feeling for the picturesque may consist of, and wherever it may be situated—in the head or the heart, as I have said before—there can be no doubt, in the course of manifold rides upon hard-trotting horses, sorrowful jades, and broken-down hacks, all the feelings and sensations of a fine kind are jolted downward, and are beaten up into a sort of hard, horny filament, situated in a postilion, as he usually is found, somewhere between the posterior flexure of the pelvis and the posting-saddle. English postilions, who rise in the stirrups, may have some remains of the feeling occasionally left in its original position; but French, Italian, German and other postilions, who go on through life, jog, jog, jogging upon their *os cocygis*, cannot and never do have a vestige of it left in the right place.

However, to return from a digression of infinite importance in a book of natural history like the present, the postilion did pause as if he had some feeling of the picturesque: the fact is, he had been told that the scene exhibited from the top of that hill was one of the most beautiful in Europe: and so it is! As Colonel Adair and Helen then beheld it, the sun was shining from the right hand, not above ten-degrees above the visible horizon. That horizon was indeed low down, for there were no objects to obstruct the eye towards it, except a line of feathery trees, fringing a part of the hill, on the shoulder of which they then were, and which ran like a spine out into the open country below. To the east the same upland rose still higher than the road, and swept away in an amphitheatre, sheltering the plain below; but so gently did it blend with the level country, that those who coming from the sea had to pass that spot, scarcely felt that they were rising till within a quarter of a mile of the top. Upon this soft slope were planted woods, and laid out meadows, and many a gentle undula-

tion of the land now caught the rays of the declining sun, marked by bright lights, and long shadows, while over the whole spring was spreading out fast her varied robe of many tinted greens. At about four miles onward in the plain, upon a little rise which started up as if emulous of the neighbouring hills, was placed a small country town, embowered in woods, with a high and graceful spire of a new church pointing up from about the centre, and the old tower, and broken arches of some ruined abbey breaking the line of trees upon the declivity. The sun was somewhat behind the town, so that the whole mass—buildings, and trees, and hill—were all in deep shade ; while behind, doubly bright by the contrast, stretched out a wide scene of fields and hedge-rows, all lighted up in the full sunshine. Nearer to where Helen and her father were placed, upon the slope of the higher hills ere they melted in the plain, appeared a pair of old, but handsome gates, with a plain stone lodge ; and as the eye ran along in the direction first taken by a road which branched off through those very gates, there might be seen, at the distance of about a mile, part of a large stone mansion, built in the same style as the lodge, rising above the tall old trees which interposed and cut off a full sight of the building.

“ Is that Alton ? ” demanded Colonel Adair, speaking to the postilion out of the window, and pointing to the house above described.

“ Yes, sir ! ” replied the man, cracking his whip and driving on.

Helen felt a slight faintness come over her, and her father asked if she were ill. She answered in the negative, and answered truly ; for it was only the chill uncertainty of the future, the vague, doubting, apprehensive feeling which we experience ever on entering new and strange scenes, and beginning a fresh course of life, with companions that we know not well, and with events before us that cannot be divined by the wisest skill of man, which crept over her heart for a moment as she thought that there was to be her dwelling during the long absence of a beloved parent, and that there even now were congregated many whom she had never seen before, many who had not one thought in common with all the feelings that were busy in her bosom.

The carriage rolled on, however ; the gates of the park were thrown open by a little old woman from the lodge ;

and following the sinuosities of the road, as it wound in and out through large masses of fine old timber trees, they reached in about ten minutes the esplanade before the house. Two or three servants were out in a moment to open the doors and receive the guests; and from the butler, who of course took the lead, Colonel Adair learned that Lady Mary and her guests were dressing for dinner, but that he and his daughter had been expected even the day before, so that apartments were prepared for them. To these apartments they were now led; and Helen, in those destined to herself, with the pleasant augury of future kindness, which very slight tokens of mindfulness afford more surely than loud professions, perceived a thousand little cares which Mary Denham herself had bestowed to render her abode comfortable and pleasant.

According to her father's desire—for with her own inclination she would not have come down till after dinner—she hastened to dress herself, but the first thing she beheld in the dressing-room were a number of water-colour paintings of the scenes in which she herself had passed all her early years, hung round upon the walls. Till she looked at the names which were written beneath each, and saw, “—The seat of Lord Methwyn,” “—The park of Lord Methwyn,” she forgot the connection between Lady Mary and the family to whom all that part of the country belonged; but as she examined them again, she perceived, from the marks on the wall, that other pictures of a larger size had been lately removed to make room for these, and with a sudden apprehension, gathered from that fact, lest Lady Mary should have seen into the secret feelings of her heart, the blood mounted quickly up into her cheek, and she put her hands before her face, as if some one had been present to remark the passing emotion. The next moment the sounds of an opening door and a light step in the adjoining room made her turn. The visitor was Lady Mary herself, half dressed, and Helen hastily quitted the pictures to meet her, though he it remarked that the blush we have noticed was still upon her cheek, and perhaps a little heightened by seeing that her friend perceived how her attention had been occupied. She was soon relieved, however, for, after the first kind words of reception, Lady Mary pointed to the pictures, asking, “Are they not prettily done? They are by my Aunt Pontypool, painted several years ago, and

I thought it would please you to have in your dressing room views of the place where you lived so long, rather than the series of fine and very picturesque prints of public buildings in India, which before occupied their places. But now, Helen, dear, make haste with your toilet, and I will be back with you in five minutes, so that we can go down together, for we have collected a large party, thanks to the chaperonage of my Aunt Pontypool, without whom I should be obliged to live in solitary grandeur, like a raven of a hundred years old, in a tree still older, and should not dare invite one young man to the house for fear of my reputation."

Helen did make haste, but she was still not quite ready when Lady Mary returned. There was not much to be done, however, and in that little her fair cousin assisted her herself.

"I would neither send you my own maid, Helen," said Mary Denham, "nor the little maid you are to have all to yourself, because my own is pomposity itself, and would rather delay than assist any one who did not know her ways, and the little Louisa is as much astray in this great house as you could be: but let me do that for you; and she was in the act of fastening her cousin's dress with her own fair hands, when her maid came in to bring her a pocket handkerchief.

"Lord, my lady?" she exclaimed, as she detected her, "do not do such a thing as that; let me finish Miss Adairs's dress.—Would you not like the back hair a little more raised, madam? and I think if the front were somewhat more *degagée* it would be better."

Helen, however, thanked her, and declined, as she was keeping Lady Mary, and the dinner hour was already long past; and putting her arm through that of her noble cousin, as soon as all that was declared indispensable was accomplished she proceeded to the drawing-room, which was but half-lighted by the twilight of spring, and the embers of what had been a large wood fire.

There were already twelve or fourteen people in the room, and as Lady Pontypool had audibly wondered twenty times what could have become of her niece, and had then "*derecayed*" that she was with her cousin, Miss Adair, giving all persons plainly to understand that dinner waited for those two persons only, every eye was turned upon the

door by which the ladies entered. Had they been able to see them, certain it is that very seldom could they have beheld two lovelier girls; and indeed the faint light in the room was still sufficient to show that beautiful outline of face and figure, and that air of distinction and grace, which each eminently possessed, and without which it is useless trying to be a lady. Colonel Adair had been down some time, and he was engaged in speaking busily, near one of the windows, with a gentleman, whose appearance as he stood—though she could not see his face—made Helen's heart thrill with emotions which the sight of none but one person on earth could occasion. The next moment, however he turned, and leaving Colonel Adair, Lacy advanced direct to his cousin and Miss Adair.

“Enchanted to see you, Charles,” said Lady Mary, giving him her hand with that free and unembarrassed air of calm satisfaction, which might well convince any one but good Lady Pontypool, that notwithstanding the ties of regard, esteem, nay even admiration, there were between the hearts of the cousins none of those chords which thrill upon the slightest touch, or, like those of the Eolian harp, vibrate sweet harmonies to the lightest breath of air. Helen's manner was, perhaps, more embarrassed; for surprise was added to other feelings. Lacy had called upon her father on the preceding evening, and she had had no idea that the same journey then lay before him which she was about to take. He shook hands with her warmly, however, and, as the twilight favoured, perhaps held her hand in his own for an instant longer than necessary, with a dearer pressure than that with which he would have touched the hand of any other person. It was but an instant that he held it, as we have said, and the pressure was so slight, that had she been nearly a stranger to him, she could not have resented it as impertinent; but in a matter which in general lasts but one moment, like shaking hands, a second moment added to the first makes all the difference; and when words of love have passed between man and woman, a slight, a very slight pressure of the hand will speak them all over again—to the heart. Lady Mary Denham gave Lacy time to shake hands with Helen, and smiled kindly and meaningly upon him as she did so; but the next moment she inquired, “When did you arrive? I did not expect you till to-morrow.”

"We arrived five minutes ago," replied Lacy, "but you know I dress quickly, and therefore was down sooner than the rest, and sooner than yourself, my fair cousin."

"We! we!" cried Lady Mary; "Why, Charles, who, in the name of fortune, have you brought with you? We! we! are you an army?"

"No, not quite! I have only brought two personages," replied Lacy, "for whom I have made the butler hunt out rooms, though I find that your inn is very full, Mary. I have taken possession of the blue room on the left, with its appurtenances, for my right honourable father, and have chosen one of the bachelors' rooms at the end of the other wing for my honourable friend, Major Kennedy."

"Well, Charles, you certainly do take the greatest liberties with me that ever I endured!" exclaimed Lady Mary, laughing, while at the last name, a degree of red came over her cheek which she thanked the dim light for hiding, "but I must put up with your impertinence, thanking heaven it is but for a short time;" and she moved on, still keeping Helen's arm in her own, to welcome her other guests, several of whom were dinner visitors from the mansions round. She had scarcely greeted all, however, when the drawing-room door again opened, giving entrance to Lord Methwyn, followed close by Major Kennedy.

Taking a liberty with Lady Mary's cheek, which he always did towards any of his female relations who were young and handsome, Lord Methwyn saluted her with a kiss, calling her his dear child in a truly parental tone, and then passed on to speak to others in the room with whom he was acquainted, leaving sufficient bustle, in what sailors would call his wake, to allow Lady Mary to greet Major Kennedy, with not many eyes resting on them. They said but a few words to each other, but they were said in such a tone and manner, that Helen's breath for a moment came thick with a new discovery, and she was instinctively about to withdraw her arm and leave Lady Mary, when the latter turned, saying, "Why, Helen, I must obtain your acquaintance for my uncle. I forgot you had never seen him.—Lord Methwyn—my sweet uncle, will you listen to me?—Lord Methwyn—"

At that very moment Lacy was engaged in saying, "Lord Methwyn! Colonel Adair!" and Colonel Adair was drawing himself up into such a line, that another straight line

might have been projected parallel to it to all eternity, without touching it in any point. At Lady Mary's call, however, the peer turned and crossed over to her, and Mary proceeded, "Let me make you acquainted with my cousin, Miss Adair."

Lord Methwyn immediately said and did what was gentlemanly, and was proceeding with perfect ease to talk about London and the weather, and other small and great things, when the doors between that room and the next were thrown open, and a blaze of light rushed in, sufficient to have announced without other explanation, that "dinner was on the table." The magic words, however, were pronounced at full, and the party proceeded to perform that most difficult and unpleasant manœuvre, of sorting themselves into pairs to get into the dining-room. The young lady of the mansion did, indeed, take care to arrange the ceremony, as far as it concerned those in regard to whose position she was at all anxious, saying to her uncle, "You stand by me, my lord, on this occasion."

"I will always stand by you, my fair niece, and never require a better situation," replied the peer with a smile.

"Colonel Adair, will you take my Aunt Pontypool—Charles, Miss Adair—Major Kennedy, Lady Susan Oatstraw," continued Lady Mary; and thus looking round the room, and making various signs to direct to people who were in doubt, towards their proper partners for the moment, she followed Lord Methwyn to the dining-room. There Lady Mary put in practice but one stratagem, which consisted of the words, "Lady Susan Oatstraw, will you not come near me?" Lady Susan and Major Kennedy accordingly moved up, and the rest of the guests seating themselves as best they might, the meal began.

The commencement of almost all things, even of dinner, is solemn: but under the progress of good viands, through the lips, and the influence of good wine upon the brain, the solemnity wears off, and gayer and kindlier feelings arise in the bosom of every sarcophagous creature towards his fellow shark. Lord Methwyn looked at Colonel Adair, and thought him one of the most gentlemanly men he had ever met, and Colonel Adair looked at Lord Methwyn, and thought that he had seldom seen a face which bore less expression of a tyrannical landlord, or grasping, avaricious man. Then Lord Methwyn's eyes turned upon Helen

Adair, and he certainly pronounced her the very prettiest little girl he had ever beheld, and he might perhaps think, that if he were but twenty years younger, and if widowerism were not such a comfortable thing, and if all his habits were not quite so fixed, and a great many more *ifs negative*, he might be tempted to make another Lady Methwyn, for the consolation of his old age. But, then again, as the *ifs* predominated, he turned to tell Mary how he had surprised Charles the night before, when on hearing that he (Charles) was going down to Alton, he had declared he would go with him. It was not, "Oh, wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother!" he added, "but, Oh, wonderful father, that can so astonish a son!"

By this time the words "Buonaparte" and "military movements" were beginning to circulate quickly at the bottom of the table, and that kind of conversation soon became general. A good many veteran officers were present, and for nearly half an hour nothing was talked of but the renewal of the war and the approaching campaign. But oh! how differently does every thing appear when considered and spoken of at different times and under different circumstances. For several days before, it had been all that Helen Adair could do to keep her mind from dwelling on images of death, and desolation, and despair, connected with that very subject which was now under discussion; but at present, nothing was to be heard but expressions of joy, and satisfaction, and confidence. Not a doubt, not a fear, not a regret seemed to mingle with the anticipations of any of the party; and nothing was thought of but the glory of the British arms, the overthrow of the mighty tyrant, and the re-establishment of permanent peace and tranquillity, brought about by victory and success.

The first mention of the subject was in itself painful to Helen Adair. It fell upon her ear cold and chilling, rousing up many a sad thought which she had struggled to keep down; but, nevertheless, as the conversation went on, even her mind caught some of the enthusiasm from those who sat around her; and while fear mingled with her hope, she yet did learn to trust that the event would be better than she had anticipated. As dinner went on, also, other causes of uneasiness, which had effected her at its commencement, were removed. The presence of Lord Methwyn had been no small matter of apprehension to her: for, knowing her

father's frank and decided nature, and judging of the peer solely by what had occurred in regard to the farm which Colonel Adair had held, she feared that every moment something might take place which would bring the two into unpleasant contact with each other: nor was this fear decreased by seeing Lacy's eyes often directed, with a somewhat inquiring look, to that part of the table at which his father and her's sat nearly opposite to each other; but, as the moments proceeded, and nothing disagreeable occurred, Lacy grew evidently more at ease, and Helen, who by Lady Mary's arrangement was placed beside him, lost great part of her uneasiness. Between the first and second courses, however, those alarms were entirely removed, for Lord Methwyn, with urbanity which none knew better how to display than himself, after speaking a few desultory words with Colonel Adair upon the affairs of the day, concluded by asking him to take wine, which was accepted, without any appearance of ill will.

Thus passed the hours of dinner till the ladies withdrew; and, though Lacy was too much a gentleman to make love at dinner, or to render his behaviour to Helen at all remarkable to others, yet she rose from the table knowing, from every word that he had addressed to her, and from every tone in which those words were conveyed, that the whole heart of Charles Lacy was hers, and hers solely; and unmixed and purely happy was the feeling which that conviction produced, for in this case she confided entirely to him, and resolved not to examine any obstacles, difficulties, or dangers which might lie in the way, till he himself should point them out to her. She loved him—that had long been decided, and he loved her; and as their fate was so far irrevocable, she thought there would be little use in seeking to contemplate obstacles which she could not clearly distinguish, nor aid to overcome.

After Lady Mary had risen, and the male part of the party were left alone, the conversation was even more easy and calm than it had been before. Lord Methwyn led, and did so with such gentlemanly bearing, and such cheerful good humour, that even Colonel Adair—who, too well bred to mark his dislike by any thing beyond cold distance of manner, was certainly not disposed to like the peer—could not help smiling and taking his tone of mind, for the moment, from the infectious cheerfulness of Lacy's father.

Most persons present, except one or two of the old school of fox-hunting hard-drinkers, were inclined to rise early from table ; and Lord Methwyn, overlooking the part of the board at which the bottle was still agitated, somewhat rapidly observed, “ Well, gentlemen, as we are none of us taking any more wine, we had better seek the drawing-room ;” and, rising, he was immediately followed by so strong a majority, that the recusants were obliged to yield and obey. Being in his niece’s house, the peer made way for the rest to precede him ; but, as he perceived Colonel Adair about to pass, he laid his hand for an instant on his arm, saying, “ Colonel, I wish to speak with you for a single moment ; we will join you directly, Charles ; and, on this hint, Lacy was, of course, obliged to leave the room.

“ Colonel Adair ?” said Lord Methwyn, as soon as they were alone, “ when I was speaking with my son last night upon his approaching visit to this place, he told me that you were expected here, which instantly determined me to accompany him.”

“ You did me too much honour, my lord,” replied Colonel Adair ; “ what may be your commands ?”

“ Commands I have none !” replied Lord Methwyn, smiling ; “ I leave that to you, my dear sir, since I have been long out of command ; but my object was to ascertain precisely what view my agent, Mr. Williamson, had given you of my conduct in some late transactions, inasmuch as when I conveyed a message to you through my son—not having the pleasure of your personal acquaintance—you replied that Mr. Williamson had satisfied you that he had acted entirely by my directions.”

“ I did make that reply, my lord,” replied Colonel Adair ; “ but the subject is not a pleasant one to me,—may I hope that it is nearly exhausted ?”

“ Not yet,” replied Lord Methwyn. “ I am the most opposed to Pyrronism that it is possible to conceive. I hate all doubts, and therefore always have them cleared away. The subject is a disagreeable one ; but still, allow me to say, that I gave no particular directions to my agent and attorney. I only gave general orders, and though I have no copy of the letter, my words were to the following effect ; that he should take such measures as would insure the payment of the rent ultimately, if not immediately ; but to do nothing that could be construed into harsh or ungen-

temanly conduct. Has such been his representation to you?"

"No, my lord, it has not," replied Colonel Adair; "he gave me to understand that your orders were strict and imperative, and he has since afforded me the strongest proof that his own wishes and purposes towards me were the most kind and liberal that man can entertain towards another. You must reconcile the discrepancy yourself."

"I shall not attempt to reconcile it, my dear sir," replied Lord Methwyn; "what is his object I do not know; but the fellow is certainly that sort of animal which in the vulgar tongue is termed a damned rascal, and as one does not fight one's attorney when he calumniates one, I shall first unmask him, and then turn him off. My letter to him I cannot show you, though he can, and you have my full permission to ask it; but his letter to me which drew forth that answer I can show you, and under present circumstances hold myself justified in doing so. There it is, my dear sir! read it, and then I must leave *you* to reconcile the discrepancy between this person's words and his actions."

Colonel Adair took the letter which Lord Methwyn had drawn from his pocket, and now handed to him; and advancing towards the light, he read it attentively through, with his brow growing dark as he went on. His comment, however, was short. He gave it back to the peer, merely saying, "He is a damned rascal. My lord, I have done you injustice, and I beg your pardon."

"It is of no consequence, Colonel Adair," replied Lord Methwyn, shaking the hand he held out to him; "I was desirous of showing you, that before I was at all aware of your connection with so near a relation of my own as Lady Mary Denham, I had not acted towards you as you had been led to conceive; and now let us both forget all that is unpleasant in the past, and join the ladies in the next room."

Thus saying, the peer opened the door into the drawing-room; Colonel Adair followed, and they mingled with the various groups into which the party had now separated. Helen, who had been gazing from one of the windows upon the moonlight which was sleeping upon the park without, and contrasting strangely with the factitious lights of the tapers within, turned her glance, as she heard the dining-room door open, towards the face of her father; but all was clear good humour, and Lord Methwyn on his part ad-

vanced, and leaning his back against the woodwork of the window-frame, began to speak with her in a gay and kindly tone. There were feelings at Helen's heart that rather embarrassed her, and as she replied, and endeavoured to do her best to please the father of Charles Lacy, the colour came and went in her warm cheek in a way that the peer thought very beautiful indeed. Her face was still turned towards the window, so that Lord Methwyn had all the advantage of catching its expression alone : but in a moment or two a look of fear came over it, and a half-suppressed scream broke involuntarily from her lips. Lord Methwyn turned suddenly round to discover what had caused her alarm ; but ere he could see anything, or Helen could explain that a man had come up close, and gazed in at the window, Lacy, who had been sitting at the other end of the room, talking with Lady Susan Oatstraw, darted across, threw open the glass door, and ran out into the park.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE common people of the skies (as Sir Henry Wootton calls them) were all diminished to small specks of faint light, especially towards the zenith, not far from which the glorious moon was rolling on in floods of brightness, at her highest noon. The whole world below was lying in calm tranquillity, and the air itself seemed sleeping, or, if it stirred at all, it was with the soft and tiptoe pace of some gentle ministering angel, afraid to disturb the repose of the children of earth around. In lines of faint and fainter grey stretched out the distant prospect, with the little country town upon its hill, rising up in deeper shadow between ; while the old broad woods, sweeping up towards the house at each of its angles, and leaving long lawns and vistas open to the eye on three sides, presented in themselves nothing but dark and indistinct masses.

Such was the scene which opened before the eyes of Charles Lacy, as he threw aside the glass door of the drawing-room, and darted out upon the lawn. He instantly turned towards the left, however, and there, as he expected, caught a glance of a receding figure hastening towards that part of the wood which approached the eastern angle of the

house. Lacy, though he had no means of defence, except those wherewithal nature had furnished him, did not for a moment pause to seek any, but pursued like lightning, and in a few minutes reached the wood which the figure he had seen just entered before him. The whole of the grounds of Alton were kept with scrupulous care and taste, and the wood walks, for many a furlong around the house, were as nicely gravelled and carefully swept as if they had been in a flower-garden. Fine dry Kensington gravel, as the learned reader knows, has great powers of reverberation, and, for an instant, pausing on the turf, Lacy heard the steps of the fugitive running on before him. By that sound he followed, and being very swift of foot he was evidently gaining on the other, who was apparently making for one of the side doors in the park wall. Lacy, who knew every inch of the grounds where he had often played in his boyish days, hurried on, convinced that, at the pace they mutually kept up, he could overtake the intruder long before he reached the point of escape in that direction ; but suddenly the other turned into one of the wider and straighter walks, and Lacy following caught a sight of him within the distance of fifty paces. At the end of two hundred yards more the walk ended at the wall, and feeling sure that, stopped by that barrier and the thick underwood on either side, the stranger must come within his reach, as there were no lateral paths between the spot where they stood and the wall, Lacy somewhat slackened his pace, though he still took care that the distance between himself and the person he was pursuing should not be increased, if it were not diminished. Thus they proceeded, till the stranger reached the wall, and Lacy expected to see him turn disappointed at not finding a means of escape by some other path, to the right or left. What was his surprise, then, to behold him set his foot upon something which was concealed by the shadow of the wall, and thus reaching a point half way up, vault over the other half, into the road beyond ! Stung with his disappointment, Lacy darted forward, and taking advantage of the rolling-stone which had served the other for a step to climb the wall, he also leapt over into the road, and gazed after the fugitive. The first glance, however, showed him at once that further pursuit was vain, but at the same time gave him hope of ascertaining who it was that had thus impudently entered the grounds of his cousin ; for the

stranger was in the very act of mounting a stout grey horse, which was held by a countryman, at the distance of about forty yards.

The stranger was in the saddle in a minute, though haste and alarm prevented him from gaining his right stirrup as easily as he might otherwise have done; but, not heeding that embarrassment, he put the horse into a trot, a canter, and a gallop, and, before Lacy could come to the spot where the countryman stood, was far up the side of the hill.

“Who is that, sir?” demanded Lacy, catching the horse-holder by the collar, as he was in the act of pouching some pieces of money he had just received; “who is that?—I insist upon your informing me directly.”

“Lord love your honour!” replied the man, in a quiet drawly tone of boorish dulness, “Lord love your honour! I cawnt saye; I doan’t know the gentleman, not I. He comes up to me, just as I was coming hoame, and offered to give me five shillings if I would hoald his ’orse here for an hour, or so, may be. So, says I, why five shillings is good wages, for a day’s woark, and better still for an hour or so; therefore I’ll take your honour’s offer, dy’e see.”

“Come, come, my man,” said Lacy, “such a story will not do for me; I am Captain Lacy, Lady Mary Denham’s cousin, and if you do not instantly tell me all you know about this business, I will have up the gamekeepers and give you in charge, for aiding and abetting in breaking into the preserves, and poaching.”

“Doan’t ye, doan’t ye, your honour, Captain! doan’t ye do that,” cried the man, terrified at the very thought of the severe laws then in force in regard to poaching; “I am a poor honest man, I can assure your honour: and as for that gentleman, I never set eyes on him before this blessed afternoon, as I am a living man, your honour; and, Lord bless your honour, too, he was after no poaching of that sort loike; why, he seemed a soldier gentleman, loike yourselyf, and had got on a military coat; and, love ye, sir, he said that he was only up to a bit o’ fun, going to look arter one o’ the girls up at the house loike, as we’ve all done when we were young, and whoy not?”

“What girls do you mean?” demanded Lacy sharply; “impudent scoundrel! what girls did he mean?”

“Why, only just the mayds loike, your honour,” replied

the man : " he did not tell me which o' them, and I didn't axe no questions, your honour ; but shouldn't wonder if it was little Betty, the laundry-mayde, who's as tight a little wench as any in the country, though its all guess-work, your honour ; for, Lord love ye, he never said a word, only as how he was going to look arter one of the girls."

" Well, if ever you see him again," replied Lacy, " tell him that Captain Lacy says he is an impudent scoundrel, and that if he discovers him, he will horsewhip him as long as he can stand over him ; and now, my friend, tell me your name and where you live."

The man obeyed, giving his name and address as one of the farm servants in a little hamlet just below the park, and Lacy, loosing the tight grasp he had got of his collar, let him go, and walked up the hill towards one of the great gates, the wall being too high to be climbed from the outside. As he passed a little rise, forming a sort of wave in the road, a considerable part of the highway, extending for about a mile, was laid open before his eyes, and upon it, nearly at the end, he caught a sight of a post-chaise with four horses, apparently standing still, while a horseman, who he never doubted was the identical person whom he had pursued through the park, was seen riding at full speed towards it. On reaching the side of the carriage he paused, apparently speaking to somebody within, and the next instant the whole *cortege* was in motion over the hill as fast as it could go. Lacy walked on, rang the bell at the gate, and asked the woman if any body had passed towards the house.

" Nobody, sir" replied the woman, " since that gentleman I let in about an hour and a half ago."

" What gentleman ?" demanded Lacy ; " what was he like ?"

" Why, I don't know his name, sir," she answered, " because I never saw him before, and I did not particularly remark what he was like either. He asked if my lady were not at the house to night, and when I said yes, sauntered in, and up towards the house : but I'll tell you in a minute how you'll know which of the gentlemen up at the house is he, for he's got what they call a frock-coat on, and spurs at the heels of his boots. He's a shortish young gentleman, too, and has light hair, I think, but I am not sure."

Lacy replied nothing, but walked on thoughtfully, and

when he had reached a spot half way between the gate and the house he turned out of the way, and for a minute or two paced up and down, revolving what had occurred in his own mind, with no very pleasant feelings. "This is a most extraordinary and disagreeable affair," he muttered to himself: "I can neither understand the matter itself, nor decide how I ought to act.—Looking for one of the maids. Nonsense! with a post-chaise and four!—Yet, if I tell them all, I shall alarm both Helen and Mary for no purpose, perhaps. Still it may be necessary to put them on their guard; and yet I cannot say at all, positively, who the scoundrel is, though I think from that one glance I caught at the window that I cannot be mistaken. Helen, however, doubtless saw him better, and, at all risks, I must find a moment to speak to her alone upon the subject, for there is something in the whole business I cannot understand—something from which it may be necessary to guard her; for there are evidently motives at work which I do not see, and which I fear tend to no good for that sweet, dear girl. However, I will say as little as I can at present; but hark, I hear voices calling!" and he turned again towards the house.

The voices which Lacy heard were indeed calling him, for as soon as he had darted out of the drawing-room, and the usual *What's the matter?* had been asked, we almost all followed out upon the lawn. Some prompted by curiosity, some by anxiety, the gentlemen of the party, except Lord Methwyn, who hated running, and the clergyman, who never went to seek an affray of any kind, hurried into the woods, separating through the different walks, in order to stop the offender, if he escaped Lacy, or to give that gentleman support, should he have come up with the fugitive. After some useless searching, and some absurd mistakes and pursuing each other, the gentlemen, one by one, returned to the drawing-room, and finding that Lacy had not come back, they of course did not choose that he should search longer than they had done, and consequently proceeded to call to him in various tones of voice.

At length Lacy had made his appearance, and all, except Helen Adair, at once began to ask him questions in regard to his chase and its result.

Lady Mary indeed said, "I dare say it was some one of the gardeners looking a little closer than necessary at the comanav."

"No, indeed," replied Lacy, "the scoundrel was evidently of a very different class. I wish I had but caught him."

"Well, let us hear," said Lady Mary, "who and what it was. On with your tale, *beau cousin*."

Helen looked at him anxiously, and with a very pale cheek ; and Lacy went on to tell that he had followed the man through the park till he reached the wall, where, making use of a rolling-stone to aid himself, he had sprung over the boundary ; that he, Lacy, had followed his example, but only reached the high road in time to see him mount a stout grey horse, and ride away. He then related his conversation with the woman at the gate, but refrained from mentioning the carriage and four which he had seen, or any other suspicion which he might entertain, but ended by declaring it very extraordinary.

In this all the party agreed, and many people declared that it was very provoking indeed that he had not been able to catch the intruder, Helen, however, looked very well satisfied that the matter had ended as it had done ; the colour came back to her cheek, and the smile to her lips as soon as she found that Lacy had not been successful in his chase ; and had others remarked her countenance as well as he did, they might have thought as he thought, that her feelings upon the subject were as extraordinary as the event. Let it not be supposed, however, that Lacy felt angry at Helen's satisfaction, or doubtful as to her motives. Lacy was not at all that most wretched thing—a suspicious man ; he saw that she was glad he had not overtaken the fugitive ; he believed also that Helen, from the better glance that she had had of him, must have some reason for that gladness, and he wisely conceived that her motive might be one which she would not like to specify before so large a party of strangers as was then present, and consequently he forebore from asking her any questions which might be unpleasant to her to answer, or embarrassing to evade. He resolved, however, to seek some explanation from her at an after moment, and so full was his confidence in her candour and her affection, that he entertained not the slightest doubt of her answering his questions frankly and boldly. In the mean time he advised Lady Mary to be upon her guard. The person he had seen he said was evidently neither an ordinary poacher, nor any of that class of persons who might

be expected to intrude into a park in so extraordinary a manner. He advised, therefore, that strict orders should be sent to the gamekeepers to take a reconnoissance of the park every evening, and also of the high roads near, and that direction should be given to the people at the lodges not to admit any body on foot after dark, unless they were acquainted with his person. Lady Mary promised to follow these wise precautions to the letter. Lady Pontypool vowed that she was frightened out of her life, and if she had said, out of her senses, no one would have denied it, for during the rest of the evening she enacted many a curious mistake from mere nervousness. The rest of the company commented and wondered ; the evening was rendered uncomfortable instead of agreeable, and thus passed the hours till carriages and bed-room candlesticks began to assemble, and “ all the world to sleep were gone.”

Although it were no unpleasant task to get up on the footboard behind Queen Mah’s small carriage, and travel in the fairy train from room to room, watching the calm sleep of youth and innocence, or tracing the external workings of many deep emotions on the slumbering countenances of those who have taken the awful first step into the magic round of passion, yet we must here refrain, and leave all the personages of our little drama to sleep out their sleep, whether disturbed or tranquil, until the dawn of the next morning.

In the merry, merry month of May, at which we have now arrived, we all know that fair Aurora begins to be an early riser from the couch of the bright god, and that standing half-way between summer and winter, she alternately weeps over the gone children of the year, and smiles upon those that are rising to her view. When she rose then at the early hour of five on the morning after the events we have just related, tears were in her bright eyes, and so continued for more than an hour and a half after her advent to the skies. About that time, Helen Adair, who was scarcely a later riser, and certainly little less fair and glowing a creature than herself, came down to the drawing-room of Alton Hall, not at all aware of the customs of Lady Mary’s household, and not knowing at what time the important function of breakfasting was to take place. A housemaid, with a tin shovel, a duster, and a broom, was in the very act of quitting the drawing-room as she entered, and fancying from

that sign that she was much too early in her movements for the rest of the family, she determined to go back to her own apartment, and only staid to gaze out of the drawing-room windows for a minute or two, as they afforded a different view from those of her own room. A small fine rain, as we have implied under various figures of speech, was falling fast, investing all nature with a robe of dim grey colour; but nature, even through that unbecoming attire, like a beautiful girl in the most homely dress, was looking lovely still. It mattered not, that between the eye and the grand masses of old park wood, interposed a thin fine film; or that in the chasms, and the dells and hollows of the distant prospect, rolled clouds of whitish vapour; still through the whole peered the vivid green of spring; still through the whole were seen the graceful sweeping lines which no hand but that of Nature can draw; still through the whole the eye wandered free over a wide, open, unconfined prospect; and the soul felt rising up within her from the sight, a thousand sweet though undefined associations. The birds too—the warm and happy birds—were telling, in their sweetest songs, how beautiful and beneficial was that calm spring rain, and showing how God has planted in the breasts of other animals an instinct to perceive the excellence of all his gifts, while man's slower reason, left to her own dull pride, is often long ere she comprehends their object, and often in her own selfish desires condemns the work that is bringing forth fertility, and beauty, and happiness for others.

Helen Adair gazed and admired, and although, as this was the first day of her stay at Alton, she might perhaps have calculated, at the bottom of her heart, upon long rambles on horseback or on foot, through the beautiful scenery of which she had just caught a glance the evening before; and though, perhaps, she might have dreamed of Charles Lacy being with her on these excursions, yet she never even mentally termed it, "that tiresome rain!" and only thought how much lovelier is the country at all times than the town.

She had not thus remained more than five minutes, and the thoughts of the scenery were getting gradually mingled with the thoughts of returning to her own room, and of what she should do next, when to her surprise—for she fancied herself the only person up except the servants—the form of Charles Lacy passed across before the window.

What the strange emotion is which sometimes induces us to run away from the very person whose society we love best, would perhaps be difficult to tell ; but when Helen Adair found herself there alone, and saw that Lacy was approaching the glass door through which he had issued forth on the preceding night, and that they were likely to have each other's society for an hour or more in the very pleasantest way that it is possible to conceive, namely, with no one to remark, and no one to meddle, she trembled like a condemned criminal, looked towards the other door, and certainly had there been time, and had Lacy not seen her and greeted her with a smile, she would have attempted to escape from an interview in which she anticipated nothing but happiness. Had I said, nothing but *delight*, which perhaps would have been the proper word, I might have let the reader into the secret of Helen's fears ; for doubtless that reader, if he or she have a heart like other people's will be able to conceive that a young and timid girl may feel conscious of so much *delight* in the society of another, as to be afraid of showing too strongly, too nakedly, all the feelings of her bosom, and all the deep and thrilling secrets of her best affections. Helen was terrified at her own feelings towards Charles Lacy. It is the modesty of the heart which has led woman to clothe it, ever since the fall, in garments which veil its beauty, but do not conceal that it is beautiful.

Lacy had seen her, however, and hastened to open the glass door and come into the drawing-room, where Helen still stood smiling and changing colour, in a way which showed plainly that she was agitated, and yet not displeased to see him. As he took her hand to give her the morning's greeting, he felt by its trembling how much she was agitated, and to say the truth, he was a little agitated too, for though he had determined to seek her out, in order to talk with her over the business of the preceding evening, he felt that his heart was just in such a state as to lead him on to say many things, which he knew that she would think it her duty to repeat to her father, unless he gave her full and sufficient reason for not doing so, which he feared there would be hardly time to accomplish. His eyes, however, his whole look, the glad smile that hung upon his lip, all spoke the love that was in his heart ; and yet, Lacy knowing more than Helen of, how often men by such signs and tokens

win unsuspecting hearts, and then, because their tongues have not spoken the same language that their manners have, think themselves justified in leaving those hearts to break, knowing all this far better than she did, he hesitated still whether he ought not to relieve her mind entirely of all doubt as to her motives; although, could he have seen into her bosom, he would have perceived that both in the simplicity of pure affection, and the confidence in his generous honour on which that affection was founded, she entertained no doubts at all, and was as confident that Charles Lacy sought to make her his wife as if he had come to her with the marriage settlements in his hand.

Under these circumstances, the first words of their meeting were embarrassed enough. He asked her how she did, and hoped that the disturbance of the night before had not hurt her rest, and he called her throughout by no name at all, either christian or surname, for he was determined never to call her Miss Adair when they were alone, and he feared to call her Helen, lest, whether he would or not, his lips should put "dear" before it. Helen replied like a lady, but like an agitated one, and thus they remained standing at the window, where Lacy had found her, with both their hearts beating in a very ominous way.

At length Lacy began to think that all this was very foolish, and therefore he resolved to come to the matter of his inquiries. "It was a very extraordinary occurrence that of last night," he said; "will you let me ask you one question in regard to it? You must have had a better view of the person who was impudent enough to look in at the window than I had; and yet I confess, from the mere glance I obtained, I could not but think that I had seen the face before. Will you tell me then, did it strike you as one you know?"

Helen coloured and then turned pale, and for a moment or two she did not reply, but at length she said, "Oh, Captain Lacy, I wish you would not ask me that question."

"Indeed!" said Lacy, a slight cloud coming over his brow, as he did not comprehend the motives of her objection. "Indeed! Far be it from me to intrude into any secrets."

Helen was agitated, but something like coldness in Lacy's tone gave her more command over herself; and with her cheek still pale, but the confidence of a clear heart in her

countenance, she lifted her eyes to his face, and gazed at him for a moment with a slightly reproachful look, as if she would have asked, "Do you doubt me?" Lacy felt all which that look implied; his heart smote him, and taking the hand he had not long relinquished, he added, "Far, far be it from me, Helen, to ask you any thing that you would wish to withhold."

Helen might have resisted reproach or doubt, but she could not resist tenderness and confidence. "Nay," she said, "I do not indeed wish to withhold any thing from you, Captain Lacy, but ——"

"Do not, do not call me Captain Lacy," he interrupted warmly. "May I not have another name?"

"Well then, Charles!" she continued with a cheek blushing like scarlet, and her voice sinking almost to a whisper, as it pronounced that name—although, be it remembered, she was so much accustomed to hear him called so by the family of Dr. Bellingham, that it often came close to her lips when she least desired it. "Well then, indeed, I have nothing to withhold from you, but am not sure—I may think that I know the face, and yet be mistaken—I saw it but for a moment—and cannot believe it."

"But whose did you think it was then, Helen?" he demanded eagerly. "You can tell me what are your suspicions at least—what, what are you afraid of, dear Helen?"

"Oh! Charles, Charles," she said, turning away her head, "I am afraid of you, or rather I should say, for you—you are quick and hasty," she added, "and I am afraid you might resent what certainly was an impertinence in a manner that might bring misery on all that—that know you."

Lacy now understood her fully, and raising the beautiful hand he held in his to his lips he kissed it repeatedly. "Thank you, dear Helen—thank you, thank you for your candour," he said. "Be thus frank with me completely, and tell me if our suspicions point at the same person."

"If you will promise me upon your honour," she said, "to take no farther notice of a matter in which we may both be mistaken—I mean to take no—not to—not to—I do not know how to express myself."

"You mean, not to call the scoundrel out!" replied Lacy, smiling. "Well, dear Helen, I will promise that." But there was a certain look of meaning hung about Lacy's

lip as he spoke thus, which caught Helen's attention, and she asked, "Without any mental reservation, Charles?"

Lacy laughed. "What mental reservation can I have, Helen?"

"Oh, I do not know," she answered, smiling in return; "but now I certainly will not tell you. It is but a suspicion—I could not at all distinguish his features, and it was only something in the general appearance of the whole that made me think that it might be——"

"Well, well, dearest Helen," replied Lacy, "I see that we have fixed upon the same person in our own minds, and that is sufficient."

"Do not alarm me!" said Helen, turning pale again, and instinctively laying her hand upon his arm, as if to detain him, though Heaven knows he showed no disposition to leave her. "Do not alarm me! Oh, Charles—oh, Captain Lacy, you must indeed promise me to pursue this matter no farther. If you would have me know a moment's ease, you must promise me not—not to do what I see you are inclined to do."

"If you mean I am to promise not to call him out, Helen," he replied, "I have already done so. I cannot of course take such a step with a man against whom I have nothing to urge but suspicion—I do not think of it, I assure you."

The assurance might have satisfied some people, and Lacy certainly never did intend to call out the person he suspected; but he did intend to follow him that very day, and taxing him with the offence, to horsewhip him severely, if he found his suspicions confirmed either by admission or prevarication. Although, of course, he never dreamt of letting Helen know his resolution, or in what it was likely to end; yet the consciousness of having formed it so far rendered his manner, if not embarrassed, at least reserved, that she became instantly convinced that something more was in his mind than he suffered to appear, and she resolved to use all her influence to stay him from actions which she both condemned and feared. "Will you not promise me," she said, "not to pursue this business farther in any shape?—Oh, Charles, is it not sufficient to see both you and my father about to leave me, and to know that you are both to be surrounded by a thousand dangers?—Is this not enough, that you should add fresh anxieties and fears to those I already entertain?"

"Nay, nay, dearest Helen," he replied, "why should you entertain any in this instance?"

"Because I see you intend to do many things that you do not let me know," replied Helen. "You men think that you are entitled to deceive us women upon what you call affairs of honour: but, in this instance, your honour is not at all concerned; and when it will set my mind at ease if you promise clearly and distinctly not to pursue it any farther, I think you ought to do so for my sake."

"Well, well, I will—I do promise," replied Lacy; "what is there I would not do for your sake? but indeed, dear Helen, we are obliged sometimes to deceive you in matters of danger, for you might attempt to influence us in a manner which would either give us the pain of sternly refusing, or risk our honour, which is dearer to a man than life."

"No, no, Charles, that I would not," cried Helen warmly; "I certainly disapprove of the whole system, but where your honour was really concerned, none would or should act but yourself, and I would not,—no, indeed, I would not attempt to influence you—no, not though my heart should break." She spoke warmly and eagerly, and as she did so, deep feeling and a quick imagination caused the shadows of manifold emotions to pass over her countenance, like light clouds over the sky; till at length, as her fancy called up the painful images of all that might follow the forbearance of which she spoke, the bright tears swam in her beautiful eyes.

It was not to be resisted! Lacy had already her hand in his, and gliding his arm round her waist he drew her to his bosom, and kissed the blushing cheek over which such bright and beautiful expressions were passing. That act made the tears run over through the long dark lashes, and disentangling herself gently from his embrace, she gave him a look of grave reproach, as if she would have said, "Charles, you should not have done this!" but she did not speak, for she felt a faintness stealing over her that frightened her. Lacy knew that he was now bound in honour to go on, and though he saw by her paleness how much he had agitated her, he thought it better to proceed at once. Leading, or perhaps I might say, supporting her to a sofa, he sat down beside her, and still keeping her right hand in his, he said, "Helen—dear Helen, although I had resolved

to wait till my return from the Continent, yet after what has passed I must leave nothing unsaid."

"Oh ! Charles, Charles, spare me now," cried Helen : "another time—if I could but get back to my room!" But Lacy went on—" Nay, nay, dearest," he said, "compose yourself; I have nothing to say that should agitate you thus. That I love you deeply, sincerely, devotedly, you must have long known; and I will not do my dear Helen the injustice for one moment to suppose that she would have acted toward me as she has done unless she could return my affection."

Helen shook her head with a faint smile, as if to say, "You know that too well, Lacy;" and he continued,— "Well then, Helen, let me speak with you calmly; for having said thus much, I have still much to say, and we may not find another opportunity of speaking together, without the presence of others. Of course, Helen, I should be eager and anxious to secure the prize I have obtained, and if my dear Helen feels as I hope she does, she would not insist upon any long delay ere she gave me her hand; but this new breaking out of the war, and the absolute necessity of my joining my regiment immediately, of course interferes; and I think, from the motives I am about to give, that it will be better to keep our engagement to our own bosoms till after my return."

"Indeed, Charles," cried Helen, as he brought to her mind even by such a proposal the duty of communicating so important an engagement as that between herself and him to her father; "indeed, Charles, I believe that no consideration ought to prevent me from telling my father every thing. Hitherto, Charles, he has been my friend and confidant through life; and surely I ought not to conceal any thing from one placed by nature, and taught by affection, to guide and direct me on all occasions."

"But listen to me, dearest Helen," said Lacy; "you shall hear my motives, and then you shall judge; for certainly you have every right to act as you think fit, when you have heard all and considered all. Some differences, as you know, exist at present between my father and yours; and I scruple not to say, that that scoundrel Williamson, for some purposes of his own, has contrived in every way to aggravate those differences. Under these circumstances, both your father might object ——"

"Oh, no indeed, Charles," exclaimed Helen, "he would not—I am quite, quite sure!"

"I am afraid, Helen, you are mistaken," answered Lacy gravely, not well knowing how to explain all the difficulties which he foreshaw, without hurting her feelings—"I am afraid you are mistaken. Your father is a proud man, and I think, Helen, that he might—nay, I am sure, that he would object to give his daughter to the son of a man with whom he has had some misunderstanding, unless dearest Helen, I must say it, though the idea of fortune mingles but ill with such feelings as ours—unless he could give his child such a portion as he would consider she ought to have."

Helen turned pale, for she had now got the clue to Lacy's difficulties, and she understood and appreciated them all in a moment—but the first sensation was too painful to admit of speech, and her lover went on: "Now listen, dearest, to what I propose to do. My father and yours have met, and the evening has past over, not only calmly, but, after having some private conversation with each other, they seemed mutually better satisfied. I wish to let events take their course for a time, till our parents grow, as I trust they will, from acquaintance into friendship. My addresses to you then will come under a very different aspect when I ask your father to give his daughter to the son of a friend, and not to the child of one who, he thinks, has recently ill-treated him. Under those circumstances, he may sacrifice any feeling of pride, in favour of our mutual affection. In the mean time, you are here with my cousin Mary, not more amiable and kind than judicious and right-minded. I can have no earthly objection to make her acquainted with my love for you, nor any to your consulting her upon every point of your behaviour. Indeed, I feel sure that she is already well aware of my feelings, and would do any thing to promote our happiness."

He paused, and Helen mused for a moment or two, but at length she replied, "I will do as you please—but in concealing any thing from my father, I confess, Charles, I shall act against my better judgment. He values his daughter's happiness, I believe, too highly to oppose her where he knows that happiness is really implicated; but, even were it otherwise, Charles, I think I should be bound—equally bound, if not more strictly, to tell him all. He is my father, Charles, and I have always thought that a girl's duty to

wards her father was as imperative as that of a woman towards her husband ; and I have often fancied that the man who sees that the person he loves has any concealment from her own father must learn to fear that, when she is his wife, she may have concealments from him also. Is it not true, Charles ? am I not right ?”

Lacy was struck, and even affected, for there was in her manner and her look a sort of deep-toned, thoughtful, and energetic expression, which he had never seen upon that lovely countenance before, and which gave it a new and even more touching interest in his eyes than it had previously possessed.

“ Dear Helen,” he replied ; “ dear, excellent girl ! far be it from me to combat such feelings, though I might point out some shades of difference between the duties of a daughter and a wife ; yet the principles upon which you act are too beautiful and too just for me to attempt to shake them by any petty distinctions. You shall tell your father, whatever be the consequences ; but only, Helen, promise me two things, to guard me against those consequences. First, consult with Mary as to the best means of inducing your father not to oppose ; and secondly, Helen, if you would have me know any peace, from this moment for evermore, promise me that you will never be the wife of another ; and that, sooner or later, if we both live, you will be mine.”

Helen bent her head, and for a moment there was one of those struggles in her heart, which doubt and fear urge against confidence and affection whenever we are about to take upon ourselves an irrevocable engagement. At length, still blushing and agitated, she lifted her eyes and placed her hand in that of Lacy’s. “ I may promise you that, Charles, at least,” she said ; “ I may promise you that at least.”

“ Thank you, thank you, dearest Helen,” he replied ; “ now, at length, I have some assurance of happiness. During the last nine months, I have been in a state of mind in no degree enviable ; though I am sure, if I could have foreseen all, I would have spoken long before.”

“ During the last nine months !” said Helen, in a tone of inquiry, and perhaps surprise.

“ Yes, dearest Helen,” answered Lacy, “ ever since I left you at ——— ; for even there, I loved you as deeply, as fondly, as I do now.”

"I fancied that it was so," replied Helen Adair, in the simplicity of her heart; "for I thought you would not behave so to any one you did not love."

A lover's curiosity is the most greedy of all things, and Lacy's was now roused to know whether Helen had even at that time loved him in return. She was not very willing to answer his questions, and yet not very skilful in evading them; and thus the conversation was prolonged farther than shall be recorded here. Nor shall we be so indiscreet as her lover, and pry into the secrets of Helen's heart. Lacy was satisfied; and, therefore, we having no farther business with the matter, will only add, that when, about nine o'clock, Lady Mary Denham went to Helen's room, she found her there with some half-spoiled work under her hands, and her thoughts very differently employed indeed.

CHAPTER XV.

AT all times and all seasons, the letter-bag in a country house, nay, the very sound of the horses' feet that brings it from the next village, is an interesting thing. Seldom, very seldom, does it happen, that all the dwellers in a mansion are either of that calm and impassible temperament, or in that unloping, unfearing state of mind, where no agitating expectations, nor dreams of happiness, nor anticipations of sorrow, are connected with distant places and persons far away; and there, and there only, is it that the sight of the letter-bag can produce no emotions, and the sound of the horses' feet clatters over the gravel in vain. If there be youth in the house, youth will have its longing; if there be middle age in the dwelling, middle age will have its speculations; if woman be there, hope and fear never sleep in her bosom; but, like the twins of Leda, one rises while the other sets. To all, to all but the last stage of apathetic age, or the first years of thoughtless infancy, the letter-bag in a country house must set imagination and her idle train as busy as emmets in the sunshine. If it be so at all times, how much more was it in a house where, as in that of Lady Mary Denham, expectation in the breast of almost every one of her guests was like a young soldier on an outpost, awake and ready to present fire at every thing. Each had

their private sources of anxiety, apprehension, and hope—and besides all this, over the whole house, as over the whole country, reigned a thirst for those public tidings which were to raise still higher, or in some degree allay, the excitement of that extraordinary period.

Lady Mary herself, though as we have seen not the first up, was the first at the breakfast table; for though she had brought Helen down with her, yet Helen lingered for a moment to look once more out of the window at which she had been standing when Lacy passed in the morning. There were pleasant associations attached to it—and why should she not? Helen came next, and then the next who appeared was Lady Pontypool. Colonel Adair followed, fresh and rubicund from a long morning's walk in the rain through the dry and sheltered walks of the park; Major Kennedy, Lord Methwyn, and one or two others, came quick upon the rest, and breakfast began in a quiet, tranquil kind of way.

“Have not the letters come, Mary?” asked Lacy, before breakfast was half over; “they must be late to-day.”

“They come an hour later than they used to do, Charles,” replied Lady Mary; “and the post-master at the village tells me, he being an Irishman, that it is all on account of the new road and the short cut. They arrive at ten, sometimes a little later.”

Breakfast went by, and gentlemen and ladies rose and looked out of the window with the peculiar saunteringness generated in the human mind by breakfasting. Lacy observed that the sky was beginning to clear, and that it would be a fine day. Major Kennedy spoke a few words to Lady Mary in a low tone, about riding out over the hills, and other matters. Lord Methwyn asked Colonel Adair in a friendly tone, which did two hearts in the room a great deal of good, how he was going to bestow himself; and Colonel Adair was in the act of answering, when the butler—with his own fat and fair fingers brought the letters into the room, and attracted all attention to himself. They were soon distributed, and it was found, that besides newspapers innumerable, almost every gentleman present had to receive an epistle, if not two, from some person or persons to the rest of the company unknown. Those who were diffident in regard to their powers of smiling over bad news, if bad news should be within, carried their letters unopened to

their own rooms ; while the rest, who either expected no bad news, or felt confident they could command their faces to perform what evolutions they liked, begged each other's pardon, and broke the seals. Lord Methwyn was the first done, though having received three epistles, it would have seemed that his burden was the heaviest. The secret, however, was that they were, as he expressed it, only letters on important business, which might therefore be read at any time ; and so, after gleaning throughout a few sentences, without much care as to nicety of folding, he crammed them into his pocket for his valet to remove at leisure. And yet Lord Methwyn was quite a man of business, and probably made out the general meaning of every letter he received within, at the utmost, three weeks after the day when it was delivered. On the present occasion, he ended the contemplation of his dispatches just in time to find Colonel Adair, Major Kennedy, and Captain Charles Lacy each with an open letter in his hand, gazing upon each other with an air, not exactly of dismay, but at the very least of surprise. There was no look of secrecy in the countenance of either ; and therefore, without ceremony, the peer exclaimed, “ Well, Charles, what's the matter ?—Well, Colonel, what is it ?—Well, Kennedy, what has happened ? Will none of you, as well as looking black and grim, like the statue of Memnon, imitate that good gentleman of the desert, and utter sweet sounds ?”

“ Why, as all our letters seem much of the same form, and are apparently written upon the same stiff, official paper,” said Lacy in reply, “ I doubt not that they are of the same unpleasant tenor, which may as well be told at once. This quick-witted fugitive from Elba, has it seems made such good haste, and is making such rapid and gigantic preparations, that no time must be lost by his opponents ; and I at least am here commanded to join immediately. How all one's pleasantest plans are overthrown in an hour ! Here was I, Mary, intending five minutes ago to persuade you, and Miss Adair, and Lady Susan—(he added)—to ride over the hills to Hurrygap ; and now I must think of nothing but post-horses as fast as possible.”

There was more than one pale cheek in the room as Lacy told the contents of his letter, and as Colonel Adair and Major Kennedy confirmed his supposition that the epistles which they received were to the same effect. What

plan was to be pursued by each, was now the question ; and while the women of the party stood by in silent grief waiting for the decision of the determining sex, and the gentlemen not concerned offered their advice to those who were, the three officers held a consultation together upon what was best for each. Colonel Adair was inclined to cut across the country at once, but Lacy showed him that such a proceeding would probably delay him as long and might delay him much longer than by going at once to London, leaving his last orders with his agent and receiving the last commands of the Commander-in-chief, and then setting out upon the direct road. " We shall arrive to-night in time to see Greenwood, to-morrow morning we can see the Duke, and before night we may be sixty or seventy miles on our way. Such is my plan, and if you and Kennedy, Colonel, will take each a place in my carriage, I will answer for making the postboys do their best—what say you ? "

" Shall we not put you to inconvenience ? " demanded Colonel Adair.

" Far from it, " replied Lacy ; " your society will keep me as far as possible from melancholy thoughts—for it is not to be denied that to be disappointed of my ride over the hills, and of the two or three days' enjoyment of such society as we have here, is enough even to make a gay heart feel sad."

His offer was immediately accepted by Colonel Adair ; and at the same moment Lord Methwyn advanced, and in a tone and manner which were comforting to Helen's desponding heart, added to his son's proposal, by saying, " I hope, Colonel Adair, that during your stay in London you and Major Kennedy will make use of no house but mine. Look upon it as an inn, gentlemen, with this only difference—that it is an inn where you will be most welcome on your own account. I am only sorry, he added, " that the host is absent."

What might have been Colonel Adair's reply we cannot say if he had been left to himself ; but Major Kennedy, on his part, accepted the invitation in such terms that Helen's father felt it would be ungracious to refuse. The bustle of preparation next succeeded : a servant was sent off for post-horses, and the party in the drawing-room broke up more gloomily than they had met.

As Helen followed her father to see whether she could

assist him in any way. Lady Mary stayed her for a moment, saying, "Come to me, Helen, in that little drawing-room in about half-an-hour." Helen promised to do so if she could find an opportunity; but that seemed improbable, for she felt that she could not well leave her father for any length of time during the last hour that they might ever have to spend together. There were also the tidings to be told of what had passed between herself and Lacy during the morning; and although she feared that, in the short time before them, and in all the hurry of preparation, she should not find a moment to do so without interrupting her father in what was absolutely necessary to be done, yet Helen, from a sense of duty, resolved to watch every opportunity, and not to fail, however much she might feel that such a communication would add terribly to the agitation she already experienced. Colonel Adair's arrangements, however, were sooner made than she expected; and as she saw them completed, she was nerving her mind to begin her story, when suddenly he took her to his bosom, and, after kissing her repeatedly, to her surprise bade her leave him. "I have a letter to write," he said, "and I have also to ask the protection of the Almighty for her I leave without any protection but his. When you can learn that our admirable young friend is ready, Helen, come back to me. I know my Helen will do her best not to shake her father's firmness."

The tears came into Helen's eyes, and hurrying away, she paused a moment to wipe off those drops, and then proceeded in search of Lady Mary, who—she was led to believe from one or two of those little traits which escape all eyes but a woman's—might need consolation and support as well as herself. She opened the door of the little drawing-room to which Lady Mary had pointed, without ceremony, but was instantly tempted to retreat on seeing Major Kennedy standing by the side of her friend, and holding her fair hand in his. As she hesitated, Lady Mary called her; "Come in, Helen, come in, my dear cousin," she said; and then added to the other with a bright warm flush on either cheek, "Well, so let it rest then!—and now, Kennedy, leave me—leave me, I beg of you."

Without minding the presence of Miss Adair, Major Kennedy raised her hand to his lips and kissed it with deep emotion, and then, with one look of warm and grateful affection, turned and left the room. Helen advanced towards

her friend, but Lady Mary saw the door close before she spoke, and then exclaiming, " You see how it is, Helen !" she threw her arms round her neck and burst into tears. For two or three moments—not longer, she thus indulged, but then starting up, she wiped her eyes and said, " This is very foolish ! but you have been weeping too, Helen—though, indeed, you have better cause than I have, for you are parting with a father and a lover too."

Helen's cheek now in turn grew red ; but Lady Mary continued—" Do not think I do not see it, Helen. It is upon that very subject I wished to speak with you, to ask you plainly, though most kindly, my dear cousin, if Lacy has spoken to you as he ought to do, before he quits England. I am sure he intended to do so while here, if he did not do so before ; but these sudden orders may interfere, and if I give him no opportunity, he might have none, so I sent just now to beg him to come hither."

" Oh ! no, Mary, for heaven's sake do not !" cried Helen ; " let me go, dear Mary. Indeed, indeed, he has done all that is right, all that I could—could—but do let me go, I hear some one coming !"

" The very reason you should stay," answered Lady Mary ; and almost as she spoke, Lacy entered the room. Haste and eagerness were in his eyes, but not unmixed with a look of pleasure when he saw Helen and his cousin together. Advancing at once towards them, he took the hand of each in his, " Thank you, Mary ! thank you for this moment," he said ; " and as it is but a moment, let me use it to say, that under your care, and to your kindness, I leave all that I value most in life. Mary, I need not tell you to love her, and to esteem her ; that, you will do for her own sake ; and all that is kind and affectionate which is not implied by those two words, let me beg you to do towards her for mine."

" That I will, Charles," answered Lady Mary ; " having ever regarded you as my brother, I promise you in all things to regard her as my sister, and as your wife."

" Do so, do so !" answered Lacy, and then added in a low, but still distinct tone, " And if I should fall, Mary, then——"

" Then, Charles," answered Mary, " my affection and tenderness towards her, and hers towards me, will be hal-

lowed and confirmed by our mutual grief. But I will leave you now — ”

Helen could not speak to beg her not, for she was drowned in tears, but she held out her hands imploringly towards her ; and Lacy said, “ No, stay, Mary ! we have but a moment ; the horses are putting to !—Helen, dearest Helen, farewell—I feel assured, I feel a presentiment, that we shall meet again in happiness ; ” and throwing his arms tenderly round her, he pressed one kiss upon her lips. “ Farewell too, dear Mary, ” he said, kissing her also, though with a different warmth ;—“ and now let us do what we can to hide these deeper feelings from the eye of the world ! Is your excellent father prepared, my beloved ? ”

“ I will seek him, ” said Helen, and pausing but one moment to wipe away her tears, she left Lacy with his cousin, and ran to her father’s room. Colonel Adair was in the act of sealing a letter, and when Helen entered he gave it to her, saying, “ Helen, in the course of nature, my love, you must survive me, and whenever it happens that you are so left, send this letter by some confidential person to Lord Adair.”

He spoke in an ordinary business-like tone, for he saw the traces of very recent tears upon his daughter’s face, and he was resolved not to say any thing that might shake her fortitude or his own : but tears are ever prolific of tears, and the eyes which have been lately weeping will always pour forth a fresh shower at words which on any other occasion would have had no effect. Helen wept again, but Colonel Adair pressed her to his heart, saying, “ Do not ! do not, my dearest Helen ! Be firm !—And now God bless and protect you, my dear child ! ” and then kissing her twice or thrice, he turned to the door, adding, “ All is ready, I fancy—perhaps, Helen, you had better stay here.”

“ Oh ! no, no ! ” exclaimed she, “ I will behave better, indeed I will ! ” and clinging to her father for one more embrace, she followed him down to the hall. The wheels of the carriage were heard grating round the front of the house, and as Helen with her father reached the last step of the great staircase, Lacy and Lady Mary came out of the little drawing-room, where he had lingered to give his cousin some explanations, and to express some wishes, and greeting Colonel Adair kindly, he asked if he were ready. The old officer replied in the affirmative, and the whole party

moved across towards the great drawing-room ; while Lady Mary, as they went, with her native kindness of heart ever prominent, tried zealously to take every care from the mind of Colonel Adair, by the fondest expression of love and esteem towards his daughter. Major Kennedy was found already prepared and waiting ; and the carriage having come up, the whole party assembled walked out to see the three soldiers depart. Then might one have marked many a different shade of human character expressed in the adieus which were given and received. Helen struggled, and struggled successfully, to repress the tears that would fain have burst forth again ; Colonel Adair was grave even to sternness, for he felt that if he slackened for one moment the rigid rein in which he held his feelings, all composure would be gone ; Major Kennedy was gloomy and sad, and though a ray of bright satisfaction seemed to break from his eyes when he took Lady Mary's hand for the last time, the clouds rolled over it again in a moment ; Lacy strove to smile, but it was evidently an effort ; and Lord Methwyn merely shook his son by the hand, and wished him good by, with a laugh and a jest, as if he had been going for a tour of pleasure. Lady Mary Denham had perhaps the hardest task of all, for there was no one in that carriage for whom she dared shed tears before the world ; and, by a powerful but unmarked effort, she refrained. All the farewells were spoken ; the three who parted entered the vehicle,—the servants mounted on the outside, and the horses dashed off. Helen instantly took refuge in her room, and Lady Mary, after begging Lady Pontypool, who had purposely avoided the parting, to go down and entertain her guests for an hour, retired to her own private apartments also, and locking the door, sat down to weep in quiet.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE events of the last four-and-twenty hours had been to Helen Adair and to Mary Denham like one of those autumnal storms which suddenly sweep the sky with fire and thunder, and then leave it wrapped in dim grey clouds, and dropping with frequent tears. Each remained in her own room for some time, and although Lady Mary, more

habituated to the great world, was more accustomed and more able to conquer the expression of her feelings than her friend, yet as the feelings which she did experience were all new, they mastered her for the time more easily than those which she might have been prepared to encounter. She, therefore, found it agreeable to weep, and when she had so indulged for a long while, she found the traces of those forbidden things, tears, were difficult to remove from her fair face. Hers, as we have said, was in some respects a harder case than even Helen's; for although it is true the latter had to regret the absence and the danger both of a lover and a father, yet she might weep, and care not who knew she had been so employed; while Lady Mary had no valid excuse to give for tears, and disdained to seek a false one.

In the mean time, my Aunt Pontypool entreated Lady Mary's guests, and most kindly did every thing she could to make them uncomfortable, and set them not at their ease. The rain had not yet completely ceased, but was falling in occasional showers, promising to clear away entirely at noon, so that there was no retreat for any of the party, except to their apartments. Thither, however, good Lady Pontypool soon contrived to drive them by one good-humoured mistake or another. To Lord Methwyn she immediately began talking of her cousin Adair; and as Lady Mary, out of delicacy to Lacy, had refrained from telling her aunt that Colonel Adair had been injured by Lord Methwyn's agent, if not by that nobleman himself, she instantly began to inform the peer how hardly he had been used. Lord Methwyn, however, knew her, and soon got away from her, and she proceeded to exercise her particular talent upon Lady Susan Oatstraw. Now there were a great many things of which Lady Mary did not inform her Aunt Pontypool, "because," as she said, "she never could tell what use she might make of her knowledge;" and yet it was difficult to know what to conceal either, "for," added, Mary, "I never can tell what use she will make of her ignorance."

In this case my Aunt Pontypool exemplified both predicaments; for after having routed Lord Methwyn by speaking upon a matter which had been hidden from her, she instantly turned to attack Lady Susan upon a subject with which she had been made acquainted; but as that subjec

happened to be a tender disappointment which the young lady had experienced from the faithlessness of a lover who had preferred wealth alone to beauty and rank, all Lady Pontypool's kind speeches and consolatory anticipations did not at all balance the pain of the original topic, so that this hearer also was soon forced to decamp. To a strong Whig member of the lower house, she talked enthusiastically of the firmness, integrity, and eloquence of Pitt, and pointed out that, after the successful consummation of all his plans, it was impossible that the Whigs could ever regain a hold of power; and then she finished the campaign by turning to a general officer who had not been employed for many years, on account of a distaste he had evinced towards the noise and bustle of general engagements, and condoled him upon being left at home when such a glorious field was opened for courage and enterprise by the return of Napoleon.

Thus, when Lady Mary Denham, having successfully conquered her inclination to weep, and obliterated the traces of the tears she had shed, came down again to the drawing-room, she found that all her guests had been put to flight, and that her valorous Aunt Pontypool alone remained in possession of the field. Concluding, however, that their dispersion had been effected by some ordinary means, she proceeded to seek her cousin, Helen Adair; but she found that Helen had by this time also regained her composure, and was busily talking to the girl whose family Lacy had visited in their misery, as we have before recorded in this veridaceous history. Louisa was in the very act of telling her whole tale to Helen's not unwilling ears, and when Lady Mary understood how they were employed, she sat down beside them and made the girl proceed, looking with a smile into Helen's sparkling eyes, as all Lacy's kindness and generosity were told by the lip of gratitude and admiration.

Helen by this time had felt that it would be necessary for her to have some female attendant to herself in Lady Mary's dwelling, and a touch of her father's pride made her unwilling to take advantage of the kind plot which Mary had laid of engaging this girl to serve her without putting her to any expense. She had considered and calculated her means, then; and as soon as Louisa had told her story and left the room, she asked her fair cousin what were the wages she had agreed to give the girl on her behalf. It was

done in so quiet but so business-like a tone, that Mary saw her friend's mind was made up ; and though she smiled kindly, and called her an unkind girl for her pains, yet she did not oppose her, and told her the sum she had promised.

To Helen's country ideas it seemed very large, but she did not at all object, and indeed would willingly have gone to the utmost limit of her means to have near her one whom she could never see without thinking of the virtues and excellence of Charles Lacy.

When this point was settled, the conversation naturally, though against all the previous determinations of both, turned to the parting which they had that morning undergone ; and both Helen and Lady Mary agreed, that, however imaginary might be the gratification, it would still be no slight satisfaction to be nearer to those who were dear to them, were such a thing possible, even though they saw no more of them than they should do under their present circumstances. Neither would speak fully all that they felt, for fear of communicating to the other the images of dangers, and sorrows, and agonies which each called up before the eye of imagination ; but still the same thoughts were predominant in the bosom of both, and they fancied what a consolation it would seem, to be near enough, in case those they loved were wounded, or prisoners, or ill, or dying, to give them all that comfort which the hand of affection can alone bestow.

As they thus thought, both fell into a long fit of musing, and at length Lady Mary started up, exclaiming, " Well, dearest Helen, I have a vision of a plan in my head, which perhaps, like the smoke out of the great copper vessel in the Arabian Nights, may some time take a visible form and shape ; but I must make many an inquiry first, even before I tell you, for though Mary Denham may do a great many things upon the pretence of being eccentric, which no other Mary may do on any pretence whatever, yet I must not prove myself so mad, my dear cousin, as to give my Aunt Pontypool an excuse for confining me : and now, dear Helen, are you ready to come down and go out, for if we do not find means of amusing all the people that are here in such a way, that they can say nothing more for their lives than that Lady Mary Denham and Miss Adair are the two most charming creatures in the world, they will be sure to

find out that we have been weeping for absent lovers, and equally sure to tell the world of their discovery."

Helen agreed that that would never do, and accompanying her friend, they sought out the female part of the guests at least, and proposed an excursion to the neighbouring town, as the best means of expending idleness; for be it known to all persons, that people when they get out of the empty bustle of the metropolis into the calm repose of country, in general—that is to say, in all cases where there is little or no mind, which is in general—feel with their idleness like a school-boy with his purse full of money, and the only consideration of either is how to spend it. Now neither Helen, nor Lady Mary, nor Lady Pontypool, were in that situation, for they had—especially the two former—thoughts sufficient to make them feel that pure and unalloyed idleness is one of the greatest blessings under heaven.—What would they, or rather what would they not, have given to have remained in perfect peace and quietness; to have seen nothing, to have heard nothing, to have known nothing all day but their own thoughts! Yet, Lady Mary knew that such a plan could not be pursued, for that her guests were exactly of that description—and a very troublesome description it is too—which requires amusement as much as a child needs a toy-shop; and therefore she resolved dutifully to amuse them, while Helen, on her part, resolved to help her.

Thus an expedition in carriages and on horseback was concerted and perpetrated, and the whole party returned, with one or two additions which joined it by the way, just in time to dress for dinner. At that meal they again assembled with great hilarity, forgetting totally, with the exception of Helen, Lady Mary, and my Aunt Pontypool, that there were any such persons on the face of the earth as Colonel Adair, Charles Lacy, and Major Kennedy. During dinner however, Lady Mary, who had taken care to station on the one side of her Lord Methwyn, and on the other the veteran officer, whose internal confirmation did not seem by nature to have been destined for warfare, found an opportunity of turning the conversation towards the struggle about to take place on the Continent. The General eagerly entered upon the subject with all the enthusiasm and zeal of a man who wished to appear what he is not, detailed all the movements which he had gathered that morning from the newspapers; related

the events which were taking place in Prussia, Austria, Russia ; and drew a splendid sketch of the grand spectacle which Belgium and the lower Rhine would present as the armies gradually gathered together for battle. Lady Mary really caught some of the enthusiasm, and exclaimed, "A magnificent sight indeed ! I should like to behold it."

" And why not behold it, my dear young lady ? " demanded the General ; " why should you not behold it ? Why not spend a few weeks during the summer at Brussels ? It is a very delightful town, a most charming residence. I am sure, were it not that imperative duties keep me at home, I should to a certainty go over to watch the progress of events, and fix my head-quarters either at Ghent or Brussels."

" Yes, but you are a man and a soldier, my dear sir," replied Lady Mary, " and do not take dangers into consideration. Remember, I am a woman, and dangers are great things to me."

" There are no dangers at all, I can assure you, my dear Lady," replied the General, whose cue it was for the present to undervalue the very idea of peril. " No danger at all ! why, all our fair dames of fashion I understand are flocking over as fast as the troops, so that good old Louis Dix-huit has a fairer court in the city of Ghent than ever he could get together in his own capital of Paris."

" I am sure if I thought that, I would go too," cried Lady Mary. " Nothing like novelty you know, General ; and the sound of the cannon and the beating of the drums, would certainly give a great zest to a ball-room, and much effect to a minuet. What say you, dear Helen, will you go with me ? "

" Oh, I am a soldier's daughter you know, Mary," replied Miss Adair, " and therefore I have no fears ; I will go wherever you venture."

And now, as I look upon the middle of a chapter to be the very best place in a book for changing the scene, as well as the begining of a paragraph to be the right post of the copulative conjunction, we will leave, if the reader have no objection, the party at Alton to finish their dinner as best they may ; and instead of giving long and winding, though not unpleasant descriptions of English scenery, which scenery our readers, if they be not of the tribe called, in the Zoological Garden, "*The Pertinacious or burrowing*

Cockney," do know full well without our describing—we will begin with a little bit of landscape in a different country, which there is at least a chance of the reader knowing nothing in the world about it.

The merry, merry month of May was over ; or, if not over, was in the very last days of its wane, and a season which promised to be both hot and rainy was setting in, when two English post-carriages, with four horses each, and a single postilion riding one horse and flanking three attached to each vehicle, were seen, or might have been seen if any persons chose to look at them—which it is very probable they did, though we do not positively affirm it—were seen then upon a flat road, with an ocean of mud on either hand, and a thin stripe of paved causeway winding along in the centre. On both sides of the road was a ditch—if in width, profundity, willows, and water, it did not deserve the name of a canal,—and behind this ditch or canal was in general a hedge-row, and a number of shady trees. Behind this hedge-row again might be seen, from the elevation at which people in a carriage of those days were placed, manifold fields, divided by other ditches or canals and other hedge-rows ; and it was remarkable, even to eyes little acquainted with agriculture, that each of these fields was giving promise of bearing, at some future period, a crop of at least three times the relative amount which any other field in any country of Europe could produce.—But this was not the sole distinctive feature of the fields of which we talk : each was little bigger than one of those small green pocket-handkerchief-gardens which lie in front of the various tiny dwellings within a mile and a half of London—gardens which give ease and consolation to the weary eyes of many a shoal of the odd fishes which, like true herrings, are regularly hung up to dry in the smoke for twelve hours out of the four-and-twenty. These fields, however, were not much larger, and were all built—ay, that is the word, though I am not talking of a wall or a dwelling-house—were all built up in such a manner as to be higher in the centre than at the sides. I use the word built, because they were all raised to their peculiar form, as well as brought to their peculiar fertility, by the laborious hand of man ; but such was their shape, size, and appearance, that when one saw any which were left fallow, or were freshly ploughed, they looked like so many large overdone pies. Numbers innumerable of fruit-

trees were scattered over all the country, and, from amidst the grove of leaves and blossoms thus created, peeped out continual cottages, unseen till one was immediately upon them, and then only seen for a moment ere they were hidden again by the trees. Now this description we rather imagine applies but to one spot upon the earth; and, therefore, the reader who has travelled—and what reader has not?—will at once discover the name and geographical position of the land through which the carriages were driving; but should there yet remain a being in all England who has not put his foot beyond his own happy and beautiful country, to him we will reveal that the track which we have attempted to describe lies between Antwerp—never-to-be-forgotten Antwerp! a place given up to siege in the midst of profound peace, and battered by the cannon, as well as blockaded by the fleets, of the wise and disinterested friends of all parties—and the fine old town of Ghent; and still further will we tell him, that this little district is called the *Pays de Waes*.

Through this country, which is as flat as a billiard-table, rolled on the two carriages easily; except when some country cart, drawn by horses of enormous fatness, forced the postilions to give up half the causeway, and run one of the wheels into the thick and heavy mud into which two days of hard rain had converted the light sandy soil on either side of the pavement. This occurrence took place seldom, however; for the carts were “few and far between,” and as it grew later disappeared entirely; for by the time at which the carriages reached the distance of seven miles from Ghent, the sun was below the horizon.—It was not dark, nevertheless, for a still clear twilight followed, leaving all the features of the landscape plainly discernible, though a shade was over them all. It was as if a cake of Indian ink had been dissolved in the thin air, and then a brushfull of a very light and watery tint brought over the whole landscape. Just at this period, the road being very long and straight, the two ladies who occupied the first carriage—feeling occasionally that sort of vague and indistinct alarm generated by first acquaintance with a strange country, and that more definite and precise kind of fear caused by a knowledge that great and terrible events are soon about to happen, and consequently looking anxiously out of the windows of the carriage when any new object

presented itself upon the road—perceived—though the nominative case is a long way off—perceived a horseman riding on quietly at the distance of perhaps half a mile before them; and instantly the fancies of either and of each began busily to investigate his name, character, and profession with very little result.

“Do you know I almost wish we had not ventured, Helen,” said Lady Mary Denham, as she contemplated the back of the cavalier, and could make nothing of him; “and yet the Dutchesse wrote that we should be just as safe as if we were at Alton.”

“The Flemings are a very honest race, I believe,” replied Helen; “but yet, of course, when large bodies of men are marching through the country, there are always a number of fearful wretches who follow to see what they can obtain in the confusion and disorder of war and all its horrible consequences. I have heard my father say, that when he was in the Peninsula, there were whole troops of Spaniards used to follow the army for the sole purpose of plundering the wounded and the dead.”

“I wish we were in Brussels!” was Lady Mary’s reply; “and real’y,” she added, “I do not see why the postilions should go so fast. They may let that man get on first.”

“Oh! but, Mary, with all the servants outside,” said Helen, “I do not think that we have any thing to fear from one man. My father always says, that one Englishman is physically equal to two of any other nation; and as there are three servants, they are equal to six.”

“But look! but look! there are more coming out of the field!” cried Lady Mary; and Helen, as she gazed on, certainly did see five or six men issue forth from the enclosures by the road-side, and approach the horseman. They were apparently no confederates of his, however; for though the two ladies could not exactly distinguish what was taking place, they saw generally that the men on foot gathered round the other as if to speak with him, and then they could distinguish what appeared to be poles raised and blows given. A flash, as of a pistol, also broke from the little group; and the postilions putting their horses into full gallop, made all haste towards the spot. The men on foot did not seem inclined to betake themselves to flight, notwithstanding the approach of the carriage, though it was evident that they had by this time struck the horseman from his

beast, and were apparently handling him very roughly as he lay on the ground ; while one of them called loudly to the postilions to drive on, and mind their own business.

Helen and Lady Mary gazed eagerly forward, as they came up, to discover what was really taking place ; but a pistol-shot from one of their own people at the back of the carriage, and then another immediately after, shewed clearly what interpretation the servants put upon the scene before them. The postilions too stopped, and Mary's attendants leapt to the ground one after the other to take part in the fray ; but seeing such formidable numbers coming against them, the men who had been attacking and apparently plundering the horseman, began to separate.

He himself at the same time struggled up in the midst, and with a powerful arm snatching one of the hoes with which he had been assailed from the hands of the aggressors, laid about him with a degree of vigour and skill, which converted their hesitation into rapid flight. Embarrassed, however, by being obliged to carry one of their comrades, who had been wounded by a pistol-shot, it seemed possible to overtake the culprits ; and Lady Mary's servants were in the act of pursuing, when they were stayed by the voice of the horseman, exclaiming in good clear English, “ Don't run after the blackguards ! don't you run after them ! If they get you amongst those cursed hedges and ditches, they'll murder you to a certainty. They have no idea of behaving *like gentlemen, or acting according-ly.*”

“ Open the door, Frank !” said Lady Mary, seeing that the person who spoke, and who was a strong powerful Englishman, upwards of six feet high, dressed in a military blue coat, &c., and in whom the reader may doubtless recognize Adjutant Green, was bleeding profusely from a severe cut upon his head, and leaned with an expression of pain upon the hoe of which he had deprived his assailants : “ open the door, Frank.—I am afraid you are terribly hurt, sir !”

“ Oh, no, madam,” replied Green, advancing with apparent difficulty to the side of the carriage, “ not much hurt, I believe. A little giddy just now, though I didn't feel it while I was licking them—but it will go off in a minute ; that fellow beat me about the head sadly, though I told him ‘ if you are a gentleman—which I don't take you to be—behave as such, and act according-ly.’ ”

While this brief conversation had been going on at the side of the first carriage, Louisa Green, who was with the second vehicle, had recognized her uncle, and, as soon as she could reach him, her arms were thrown round him; while, with her eyes full of tears, and her face as pale as death, she looked at the blood streaming from his brow, and the traces of various blows which his person and apparel exhibited in many parts.

"What, Loo! what, is that you?" cried the soldier; "but never cry, my dear child—this is a flea-bite, Louisa—a mere nothing. If they had not been six to one, I'd have made them tell another tale—or if I had not been fool enough to leave my sabre at Ghent, when I went back to see after the horses that fell sick at Lokeren. But how could one tell, when a country fellow came up and asked what o'clock it was, that the man behind him would knock you off your horse while you were looking at your watch?"

Some farther explanation now ensued, and Adjudant Green thanked Lady Mary in no ungrateful, though not the most fashionable terms, for her goodness in stopping, and for her kindness to his niece; but he persisted that he was able to ride into Ghent, and saying that he would accompany the carriages, he mounted with some difficulty, after one of the servants had caught his horse. For about a mile resolution overcame pain and weakness, and he continued to follow the carriages at the distance of a few yards. At the end of that space, however, he spurred forward, and making the postilion stop, spoke to Lady Mary through the window—"I am afraid I am more hurt than I thought, my lady," he said; "and if you will just let one of the men ride my horse into the town, I will get up into the rumble; for I feel as if I could not sit him all the way to the town, and it would not do to drop off, your ladyship may believe."

"I can believe it very well, Mr. Green," replied Lady Mary Denham; "but I will have my way now.—Frank, open the door again, and bid William take Mr. Green's horse. Now tell my Aunt Pontypool that, if it will not put her to inconvenience to go on into Ghent with me and Miss Adair, I think it will be better for Mr. Green to go in that carriage, and then he will have his own niece beside him.—You should not have attempted to ride at all, Mr. Green; but I am commander-in-chief now, so say not a

word, but obey orders." Green touched his hat in due form, and the arrangement proposed by Lady Mary was soon effected, as good Lady Pontypool, whose feelings through the whole business we have not been able to decide upon, would have walked barefooted into Ghent rather than that any of her fellow-creatures should suffer for a moment.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHETHER the fine old town of Ghent, which contains within itself many an interesting memorial of other days, was or was not really founded by Julius Cæsar; or whether it was or was not built by the Vandals, who certainly had more the gift of pulling down than raising up, at least if we may believe St. Jerome; whether it gradually rose from hamlet to village, and from village to city; or whether it was struck out at once, like Minerva, all armed, from the head of some gentleman of antiquity, certain it is that the city, which is still one of the worst lighted in Europe, was excessively dark when the carriages of Lady Mary Denham and her party drove up to the inn at the corner of the great Market-place. Inquiries had been rigidly made at the gate, passports had been scrupulously examined, and every thing gave notice to the thin errant ladies that they were approaching the scene of great events. Mine host and his troop stared a little to mark—what had been of late a rare occurrence—the arrival of three ladies without husband, brother, or son in a suit of regimentals; but when the door of the second carriage was opened, and out of it was produced the form of a tall soldier, with the blood just clotting on his brow and hair, every Fleming present asked if there had been a battle. The servants thereupon of course explained; and Green being now unable to walk, was by Lady Mary's desire carried up and put to bed, while a surgeon was sent for, and at his own request information of the accident which had befallen him was transmitted to the commanding officer of his regiment, a considerable part of which was still in Ghent. Several of the officers, with that laudable and kindly feeling which distinguishes the British soldier, immediately came to visit their hurt companion, forgetting instantly, on finding that he required at

tention and assistance, all those little peculiarities which on other occasions reminded them that he had risen from the ranks. The surgeon at once pronounced that one of the ribs had been broken, but at the same time removed all apprehension from the mind of his niece, by assuring her that her uncle would soon be well; and Lady Mary determined upon her report to proceed on her way in two or three days, provided she could make up her mind to proceed at all. On this point, however, Lady Mary was by no means decided, for although she had a good deal of courage of a certain description, yet all that she saw around her was so new and strange, that her heart beat oftener than she found convenient, whenever she thought of approaching nearer to the frontiers of hostile France. Yet there were motives most strong and powerful with that self-devoting thing—a woman, which urged her forward, and ever returned to wage war with fear and timidity. She sought all opportunities of confirming herself in her determination of going on: and when one does so, one generally succeeds.

In the mean time however, she did all that kindness and attention could do, to make the hurt soldier comfortable under the circumstances in which he was placed. His niece remained with him constantly, and acted the part of nurse; and Lady Mary herself, with Lady Pontypool and Helen, visited his chamber more than once, like true dames of romance. Green was not insensible to such kindness, and though he was so much better by the third day as to be able to rise, and come down to thank the ladies for their attention, he felt and expressed as much gratitude as if both his necessities and their services had been greater. Lady Mary received him with every expression of kindness, and making him seat himself on the sofa beside her, spoke with interest of the attack that had been made upon him, and both its causes and its consequences.

“Why, as to its causes,” replied Green; “why, your ladyship will see that I cannot well understand them. Doubtless, the rascals wanted my money or my watch, which is a good gold one; but yet when I was down, they none of them tried to take any thing from me. I wish to God I had had my sabre, for then it would have been another affair; but as it was, I had but time to fire one pistol, and a wonder it was that I had any pistols with me at all. I was going *incog.*-like about the horses, though the Colonel

knew very well what I was after, and said I was very right ; indeed, he went as far as to say when I asked leave, that I was always thinking of the good of the service. But as I was saying, I was quite *incog.* and did not intend to appear military at all ; only when I met Ensign Williamson and his father, they said that there were a great many bad parties about, and that they had heard of a great deal of mischief and plundering done down about the *Tête de Flandre*—so I put my pistols in the holsters, which was nothing, as all the world ride with pistols here."

Adjutant Green's style, as the reader may have observed, was in common conversation somewhat excursive and rambling, so that to Lady Mary and Helen his reasonings were not at all times quite clear, nor the connexion between one idea and another perfectly evident. They were then both revolving this circumstance in their own minds, and internally feeling amused at the somewhat saltatory course of his thoughts, when he suddenly gave them a fresh instance of his propensity to leap by turning to Helen, and observing, "Talking of that, ma'am, you've been very kind indeed to me, and I should like to know whether you are not a daughter of that Captain Henry Adair, who was a grandson of the last Lord Adair, and who married pretty Miss Helen Beverley, daughter of Doctor Beverley, the Rector of Stoke Norton ?"

"The same precisely!" replied Helen ; "my father is now Colonel Adair, and is with his regiment either in the town of Brussels itself, or very near it."

"Well, I know your father very well, Miss Helen," he continued ; "and I knew your good grandfather the rector—ay ! and your great-grandfather the old lord, too. My father, poor fellow, farmer Green, held a large farm at Stoke Norton ; and I can say from my heart, that your good grandfather never took a farthing more than was right for tithes in his life. But I can't make out, Miss Helen, how is it they tell me you're not rich."

Lady Pontypool coloured up to the eyes, and Lady Mary was a little uneasy ; but Helen was affected by no unpleasant emotion, at the mention of facts which she never attempted to conceal either from herself or from any one else ; and without one sign of annoyance she replied, "We never were rich ; but almost all my father had was lost in the beginning of this year by the failure of Mr. ——, his agent ; so we are poorer now than ever, I am sorry to say."

"But I can't make out that either," persevered Adjutant Green. "Why, did not your father come into one-half of your great-grandfather's property? I always understood so."

Helen shook her head with a faint smile: "No, indeed, I believe not," she said; "my father offended him by his marriage, you know."

"Ay!" said Adjutant Green, "so he did, I remember—but yet, I think it's a hard case—I can't make it out—that made no difference in the end. I know I shall tell Lord Adair next time I see him—I shall say to him, 'If you're a gentleman as I take you to be, behave as such, and act according-ly.'"

"Oh! no, indeed you had better not," replied Helen; "he is bound, I have heard, never to hold any communication with my father, so that it would be all in vain."

"I do not know that," said Adjutant Green, "I do not know that, miss—but at all events I'll try, and I only beg pardon for talking to you about your own business in such a way."

Helen, though neither ashamed of poverty, nor hurt by the mention of her own circumstances, was nevertheless not willing to prolong the conversation upon such a subject, and consequently the matter dropped; and shortly after, the gallant soldier took his leave, and retired to his own chamber. The words that he had spoken, however, fell deep on the mind of Lady Pontypool, on whose kind heart Helen's gentleness and sweetness were making terrible ravages in the way of affection every day; and as she sat with the netting which she had netted in London and at Alton, still before her at Ghent, she revolved once and again how she could serve the beautiful girl that sat before her in calm simplicity, utterly unconscious of all that was passing in regard to herself within the bosom of her kind unworldly relation.

By this time, Lady Mary had become so much accustomed to the scene around her, to the occasional display of military, and to the bustle and rumours of the day, that her alarm had worn off, and she was preparing to break to Lady Pontypool, in the tenderest manner possible, her desire of going on to Brussels the next morning, when, to her surprise, Lady Pontypool, after a silence of ten minutes,

and the accomplishment of five hundred stiches of her netting, broke forth with, "Don't you think, Mary, that we had better soon proceed to Brussels ; I do not believe, my love, that we should be in any more danger there than here ?"

"Nor I either, my dear aunt," replied Lady Mary ; "the Duke of Wellington will never suffer the French to come as far as Brussels, depend upon it ; and I was just thinking of proposing to you, and Helen, to set out early to-morrow. If we wait here in Ghent much longer, all our troops will be marching on, so that many of our friends we shall not see again before they face the enemy."

Mary ended with a sigh as she thought of all that the meeting with the enemy of which she spoke might bring about. Deep below the sparkling surface of her general demeanour, lay strong affections and feelings intense and acute. It is a common saying, indeed, and in general true, that deep streams flow silently, and that the shallow brook is the best image of clamorous sensibility ; but the character of Lady Mary Denham was of a different cast from those to which such similes can apply. The stream of her feelings was deep ; but, like the light blaze which ripples the face of the waters, the idler things of the world only served to hide the profundity of her character by the gay and dancing corruscations which they produced upon the surface. Born in the world of fashion, nurtured in the lap of luxury, endowed with every gift of fortune, and never yet encountering reverse, she had not suffered the touch of one of those depraving circumstances to dull the brightness of a feeling and enthusiastic heart. It was the real diamond, which the breath of the world could not dim for one moment ; she knew its value herself, and had been taught by her mother to keep it unimpaired. If she did perhaps conceal it in some degree from the crowd under a gay and glittering veil, such as crowds love, perhaps she was not wrong, so long as herself knew that the jewel was still there uninjured.

When she spoke then of the army facing the enemy, and remembered only how many common acquaintances she had therein, whom she had lately seen in all the pride of youth, and health, and all the gaiety of thoughtless society, and bright hope—and then suffered her mind to turn to what a few hours might make them—cold inanimate earth, or man-

gled wretches, dying, unaided by dear familiar hands, on a lost or even a won field of battle!—a cold shudder crept over her at the images her fancy conjured up. Then again, as she allowed her mind to dwell more particularly on the theme, and thought of her cousin Lacy, the brother of her early affections, falling in the flush of youth, and cut off in a career of honour and virtue;—when she thought of that fine manly form writhing in the agony of some untended wound, that noble heart pouring forth its warm enthusiastic blood till all was cold—the picture became almost too terrible for contemplation. But when, farther still, she thought of Kennedy, of him who had found means to touch a heart which the world fancied was cased in triple steel, and remembered that she might never behold him more—that he might fail before the crashing shot, or be hewed down by the unsparing sword, or expire in fiery torture in some loathsome hospital,—she could not—she would not meditate farther in such a strain, lest imagination should cast reason from her throne. Ere they had parted, she had given Kennedy hope, and with her, to give hope was to give assurance; but still she had endeavoured to think of him as most other girls of the world think of their future husband—she had sought as yet to hide even from herself the deep, intense feelings of her own inmost heart—she had endeavoured to look upon marriage, even to the man she loved, as a very ordinary ceremony, which every one submitted to, and which was convenient, or not, according to the tempers and feelings of the parties. She had endeavoured to do all this, although she well knew that the time would, and ought to come, as the hour of her marriage approached nearer, when she would think of it very, very differently—with agitation, with fear, with hope, as the greatest change that woman in all existence can know—as the casting of the great die, on whose fall depended her weal and woe through *mortal life*. She had endeavoured to do all this, and had endeavoured to do it upon principle; for she was somewhat afraid of the real depth of her own feelings; and she had succeeded in some degree in mastering her thoughts in such a manner as often to laugh off, even in her own private commune with her heart, the ideas which that heart would fain have forced upon her—though often, be it said, she would still feel a thrill through her whole frame when she thought of Kennedy, which taught her what her feelings

towards him too certainly were ;—and now, when such images rose up before her, when she pictured to herself the man who had gone forth to battle and to danger joyfully, because the hope of obtaining her led him on,—and represented him falling on the field or dying of the wounds there received,—Mary Denham, gay, happy, thoughtless, Mary Denham, as the world held her to be, felt but too keenly that a woman's heart might break even under the weight of sorrows by no means uncommon in this world.

It needed scarcely five minutes of such thought to make her resolve upon hurrying on to Brussels with all speed ; and had it been possible, she would have sought the very battle plain itself, in the midst of strife—for what, oh ! what are woman's fears, when matched against woman's love ? The next morning, then, at a very early hour, the courier set off, in order to bespeak horses and to engage apartments ; and before seven o'clock in the morning, the whole party followed, rolling on towards the Belgian capital as fast as fat Flemish horses could drag them. The roads are now excellent ; except, inasmuch as being generally paved, they have a happy art of breaking axletrees, and otherwise shaking carriages to pieces ; but that which is a disadvantage now was then a benefit, for baggage-wagons, tumrels, and artillery had within the last fortnight so frequently passed along the highways of Belgium, that any other than stone-covered causeways would have been cut to pieces under the heavy loads which they were destined to bear. Lady Mary and her party, however, met with no accident by the way ; the road, indeed, was crowded with people of all classes—horsemens, and foot, carriages, and carts, and thousands of those anomalous and somewhat dangerous animals which in greater or less numbers always follow an army. The proportion of the disciplined and orderly, however, was so much greater than that of the doubtful and the turbulent, that neither Mary nor Helen, nor even my Aunt Pontypool, entertained any alarm ; and the number of English faces which might be distinguished, and the sound of English voices which might be heard from time to time, gave a home and familiar air to the whole. As they approached Brussels, the swarms which covered the highways increased ; the augmented demand for every sort of necessary and luxury, occasioned by the presence of so many strangers in the capital, of course brought multitudes of the people

from much more distant parts of the country than usual to sell their goods while the market lasted ; and gaily-decked asses covered with vegetables, fowls, lambs and even calves, were seen ambling along pressed by their eager masters and mistresses in the hope of gain ; horses too, adorned with fine black leather harness, and long peculiar carts, all similarly loaded, occupied the road ; and ever and anon, with somewhat dusty apparel but gay and soldier-like demeanour, a regiment or party of British soldiers were overtaken as they wound in and out amongst all the vehicles that obstructed the highway.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the city, as well as in the little towns of Asche and Aloste, the numbers of English actually exceeded the ordinary population ; and at the door of every cabaret might be seen the same groups of British troops which are to be met with in a similar situation in the neighbourhood of every great dépôt. There they were laughing, and talking, and drinking, as if there were no to-morrow ; and now and then speaking their own language to the people of the country, and cursing the stupidity of the boors for not understanding English. Although the distance between Ghent and Brussels is so short, and no accident occurred to delay the carriages, yet Lady Mary and her party did not reach the capital till near three o'clock, so great was the difficulty of passing all the train that encumbered the road, and so much was the time consumed in the operation. At length, however, they entered Brussels, and began mounting that long and terrible hill which in the midst of unrivalled lace and the most beautiful display of *lingerie* in the world, leads up from the lower to the higher town.

In the course of that hill, how many faces which had been accustomed to stare into Lady Mary's carriage as it drove down St. James' street, stared into it in Brussels !—It was scarcely possible to conceive oneself not in England, and the number of her own sex and country which she beheld at every corner relieved Mary's heart of all fear, and soothed and pleased Helen, who, though she had expressed no alarm, had not perhaps felt it less. One or two bows did Lady Mary receive from gay-looking officers, as she was recognized by old acquaintances in driving through the town ; and when at length the carriage dashed up to the inn, and turned into the high-arched gateway, the courier was in

waiting to throw open the door ; but beside him appeared ready to welcome the fair visitors three persons whose appearance there set more than one heart beating—Lacy, Kennedy, and Colonel Adair !

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE are few places more disagreeable to the nose, eyes, and ears of an Englishman than a Belgian estaminet. Perhaps a man may not find the odour or the state of tobacco unpleasant when he produces for himself, and (like all proper engines) consumes his own smoke—perhaps it may not be unpleasant on a cold frosty morning to follow a pipe ; but when the question is, whether a man shall sit in the midst of an atmosphere of old cold smoke produced originally by many generations of primeval smokers, long dead, and kept up around one by a foul-mouthed generation of smokers, too actively living, it is very difficult indeed to say yea, unless the business that urges one to the estaminet be very pressing. It is true, indeed, that no place can be so fitted for the transaction of secret and important business as the estaminet ; for though, at almost all hours of the day, it is crowded to excess, yet, except in Holland, where people smoke in silence, the din is in general so universal, that nobody but the man whose ear is close to your mouth, can hear a word that you utter.

In ordinary estaminets no partitions of shining mahogany, or dark wainscot, separate table from table, and cut off the sight if not the sound of the various occupants from each other : but it must be remembered by all our friends and readers who were in Brussels about the period of which we speak, that in the widest of the three streets which lead down towards the church of St. Gudule, there was then a very handsome coffee-house, fitted up in the style of an English establishment of the same kind, and kept by a Dutchman who resided in Great Britain for some years during the French occupation of his native land. In the saloons thereof had been raised rows of partitions upon the old English plan, which suited well with the calm and silence-loving nature of the Dutchman ; and in one of the boxes thus formed, sat two personages a few evenings after

the arrival of Helen and Lady Mary Denham in the Belgian capital. I say, that in one of the boxes sat two persons, because they were together in the same box, and because there was no other person in any other part of the room, simply from the fact of that being the precise moment of the day which Belgians and other continental nations choose for filling their lungs with the pure air as God made it, before they resort to places where they can fill them with foul air of their own making—I mean tobacco-smoke. There, then, sat these two personages together, and certainly no two personages ever had a better right to sit together, for they were father and son, and no other than John Williamson, Esq., attorney-at-law, and Ensign John Williamson, of the _____ regiment. What had been the conversation which had previously taken place, becomes us not to inquire; but at the moment we entered the room, the younger of the two was saying to the elder—"Ay, but you know those very fine girls are always devilish shy at first. She'll come to her senses, father, depend upon it—she'll not hold out—if she finds that she cannot do better."

"Ay, but that is what I. am afraid of!" responded Mr. Williamson, senior. "She may think she can do better, and I tell you, Johnny, she must and shall marry you."

"That she shall certainly," answered the youth, "if I can get her; and I am very sure that if I had her alone for a while every now and then, I could persuade her; for she was always very kind and gentle as a girl, and I have heard Laura and Wilhelmina say that they could get her to give them any thing, or do any thing, except what her father forbade her. But the difficulty is how to get her alone, for that Lady Mary Denham is not over civil."

"Nor was she herself over civil, I think," replied the lawyer; "she was as cold as ice."

"Ay, but that is all come on newly," answered the son. "Why I told you how very kind and all that she was just after the old Colonel's things were sold off, and what she said about you—that they could never repay you or sufficiently thank you for your kindness upon such an occasion. If I had asked her then, she would not have said no; for she's very romantic, and would have done anything to show her gratitude."

"Ay, but the old Colonel would have held out," said the father; "I knew well enough that one must bring his pride

thoroughly down, before one can do anything with him. That was the reason I had the whole stock sold—to bring down his cursed pride, and make him grateful to me at the same time. However, I don't think she is so romantic as you fancy! I knew that scheme about Alton would fail."

"Ay, but why did it fail?" cried the other; "only because I could not get hold of her before I was seen. I saw well enough when I called on them that day in London, that she expected a proposal, and wished Charles Lacy out of the way all the time; and if I could have got ten minutes' speech of her down at Alton, she'd have been off with me, I'll bet. Oh, hang it! what between the moonlight and the carriage and four, and the fun of the thing, which a woman always likes, she'd have been persuaded. Now you see this Lady Mary has tutored her, and made her as cold and proud as herself. The only one who seemed kind and polite of the party this morning, was that old Lady Pontypool; and she got you into the corner, and was very attentive to you."

"Curse her attention!" cried the father, somewhat angrily; "why, she was asking me all manner of impertinent questions about things that she has nothing to do with: but if I find she has been inquiring elsewhere too closely, I must take other measures. I don't think, John, you pressed the girl half close enough after all."

"Why what would you have me do," demanded the other, "with that Lady Mary sitting close beside her, and whenever I said any thing civil to Helen, beginning to talk to her of something else? Very uncivil I thought it! and Helen Adair scarcely attended either; but she was afraid of showing one what she felt before them, I dare say."

"Well, well, John, we must get on quicker than we have to-day," answered the father, "or we shall bring our eggs to a bad market, I fear;—so see to it, Johnny!"

"Oh, as for that, I do not care a d——," answered the ensign; "if she holds her head high, and has got new notions into it, because Lady Mary calls her cousin, she may just carry it which way she likes; there are other girls as handsome, who will be very glad to have me I know, and with better fortunes too—and you know, father, that's the best after all—so she may live and learn, you know."

"You are a fool, John!" replied his father, tenderly; "you always were a fool; you think you see a great way,

and you are as blind as a mole. Do you fancy, you foolish fellow, that I want you to marry the girl because she has a pretty face, that you may have a race of beggars to call me grand-papa? Nonsense, you dolt! I want you to marry her because—properly managed, as I know how to manage it—your marriage with her may make your fortune—ay, put us all in a situation which we never could get hold of any way else."

"But where the deuce she should get the fortune, I do not see," answered the son; "if it were not that the old lord had got an heir, she might one day come into the money there; but at present, she has not a rap I have understood; and Henry Adair will keep her out of the other."

"Never you mind that," replied the father. "Let me alone to know where money lies. I tell you, that your marriage with her would be worth more than twenty thousand a-year to you. I have not been working to bring it about all this time for nothing, and I have been labouring so hard for that one purpose, that if it had not been for that consummate, interfering, sentimental puppy, Charles Lacy, I would have brought them to such terms before this time, that you would have had the ring on her finger a month ago. But tell me, John, you saw Captain Lacy there one morning, didn't you? You don't think he has a hankering after the girl, eh? do you?"

As he spoke, the swing door of the coffee-room gave a slight squeak, followed by the sound of some steps, and a gruff voice, demanding in French some punch. The father listened, but the sounds ceased as the strangers took their places; and the son replied, speaking of Lacy, "Oh no! not he! he's to be married to that Lady Mary. I heard my friend, Lord John Blackheath, in our regiment say, that he had been told so by old Lady Pontypool herself; and laugh heartily at Lady Mary running after him over here."

"Well, well, if that be the case, we shall soon manage the other girl," replied the father, lowering his tone a little at first, on account of the strangers. "I must try means to get her father to send her away from these people back to England, for they will teach her to think herself a very great person, and throw every obstacle in the way; and i I cannot persuade the old gentleman to do it—I must try other means, that's all. I say, John you've been some time

in the army ; now are you up to a *coup de main*—dare you venture a bold stroke for a wife, my boy ?”

“ Why, I suppose I dare venture as bold a stroke as an other man,” replied the ensign ; “ but I think it is always better not to take one without necessity, either.”

“ Ay, ay ! but when they come in your way never hesitate, John,” retorted his father. “ I always thought so from a boy, and I can tell you, that if it had not been for one or two bold strokes when I was a youth of your own age, you would never have been Ensign John Williamson, and heir to two thousand a-year. But I’ll make you heir to more before I have done with you, John, if you will but follow my advice—that I will.”

“ Oh, that I will, of course, sir,” answered the son ; “ only let me see my way clearly, and I will do anything, because I *do* like the girl. I was only thinking, you know, sir, that one must be cautious, for you know when we laid our plan down at Alton, I had very near got into a scrape. I have a great notion that Lacy has an idea of who it was he ran after through the park so sharply, for he was curst cool when I saw him the other day, so we must mind what we are about.”

“ Ay, ay ! but we are in another country now,” replied his father, “ and we may have a thousand opportunities. Besides, my boy, I am beginning to fancy that this may be our last chance, so we must make a bold hit, or lose all, not only the twenty thousand a year, but perhaps all I have got into the bargain. I have not seen the old colonel yet ; but when I do see him I will press him home, and if he do not come to terms, I will find means to make him repent it.”

Thus proceeded the conversation, with a strong looking towards self-interest characterising it throughout, but with no such clear and distinct reference to persons and things as to enable any one not previously acquainted with the circumstances to detect the latent plans of Messrs. Williamson, father and son. A shrewd person overhearing their conversation might, indeed, by no very remote process of reasoning, have learned to infer that Monsieur Williamson *père* was a confirmed rogue, and that Monsieur Williamson *filé*, with an inferior capacity, was nevertheless filially desirous of treading in the steps of his parent : but that was all. Still when two or three more persons of different

kinds entered the estaminet, the two who had first tenanted it, began to sip their beverage with more alacrity, continuing their conference in disjointed sentences only, and that in a low tone. At length the quiet of the estaminet was disturbed by a loud and authoritative voice, though the body from which it proceeded was unseen, pronouncing these warning words, "I'll tell you what, Mr. Williamson! If you are a gentleman, as I take you to be, behave as such, and act according-ly."

The swing door of the estaminet creaked, and squeaked, and rattled; and after having gazed a moment in his father's face with looks of horror and astonishment, Ensign John Williamson started up just in time to see a pair of broad unghostly shoulders making their exit from the room. The father vowed that such a speech was very unhandsome, very ungentlemanly indeed; and in his blustery, and most bullying tone declared, while he sat quite still in the box, that if he could discover who it was he would horsewhip him. The son grinned, and observed, that he did not think it was a horsewhippable person; and the conversation returned to other subjects, but was now carried on in a whisper across the table. It ended, however, in the father expressing his determination to go that moment to see the old colonel, and if possible to bring matters to an issue.

With Colonel Adair matters were brought sooner to an issue than Mr. Williamson thought. He found the old officer at home, and alone, exactly as he could have wished, but not exactly in the most desirable frame of mind for his purpose. As he entered the small apartment in which the old officer was sitting, Colonel Adair rose up before him as tall, and as straight, and as stiff as a cypress tree. He pointed to no chair, he uttered no words of greeting; but to Mr. Williamson's salutation, replied "hum!" and put his hands behind his back to avoid the grasp of the attorney's fist. Nothing daunted, however, the lawyer attributed all signs of coolness to "some of the old gentleman's queer ways," cast himself into a seat, and while Colonel Adair still stood, proceeded to tell him of various matters, some real, some fictitious, which had brought him to Brussels.

"I am happy, sir," replied Colonel Adair in return, "that you have come, and I am happy that I have seen you, inasmuch as what is disagreeable is always better brought to an end at once; and I have much wished to tell you, that I

look upon the part you have acted between Lord Methwyn and myself as most unhandsome and ungentlemanly, and consequently that I do not intend to have the honour of knowing you any more."

The grizzled grey bristles of Mr. Williamson's head rose up on end with surprise. Had he visited the post-office that morning no such convulsion of his fell of hair might have taken place, as we shall show hereafter; but having convinced himself that in their last conversation he had contrived thoroughly to persuade Colonel Adair of his good wishes toward him, he was astonished in no moderate degree at a salutation so little either expected or agreeable. He never was long, however, without a reply: "Very odd!" he said, "very odd indeed! But I see, my dear Colonel, that you have suffered yourself again to be deceived, and me to be misrepresented—though I am sure I have given you proof enough of my regard, and all that sort of thing."

"Sir, I have not been deceived," replied Colonel Adair; "you have not been misrepresented, unless your own handwriting has deceived me, and misrepresented you. Lord Methwyn, in justification of himself, put your letter to him regarding my affairs into my own hands, and I now know precisely where to look for the source of all the unpleasant things which have occurred within the last three or four months."

"He did, did he?" cried the astounded, but not abashed and unabashable Mr. Williamson, "he showed you my letter! very unhandsome indeed, I must say! very unhandsome indeed!"

"Very unhandsome indeed to write it!" replied Colonel Adair, "but not in the least to show it, when he found that the writer wished to fix upon him the imputation of the actions which that letter prompted."

"Why, what the devil would you have had me do?" cried Mr. Williamson, in a loud and heated tone—for he was one of those people whom we may call blunt hypocrites, for the genus *hypocrite* is full of varieties—"what the devil would you have had me do? Lord Methwyn demanded my opinion of your solvability; should I not have felt like a scoundrel if I told my principal that you were solvent when you were not? What the devil would you have had me do?"

"In the first place, sir," replied Colonel Adair, sternly, "I would have you not use the term '*what the devil*' to me ; and in regard to the past, I would have excused you for writing what you did to Lord Methwyn, had you not affected to blame the conduct that you prompted. I would have excused your telling that gentleman that I could not and would not pay his rent, if you had not always expressed to me your conviction that I could and would. In short, sir, I would have excused either story, had you not told the other; but having told both, I look upon you in the light which you may imagine. On these points I am satisfied, and therefore discussion upon them is useless ; but there are one or two others into which it may be still my duty to inquire."

"As you please, sir, as you please," replied Mr. Williamson, finding that high tones would not do, and yet not choosing to sink too rapidly—"as you please ; and yet I cannot help feeling a good deal grieved that our long acquaintance should thus end, because I have been compelled to do my duty. I think I must have known you now, Colonel, some thirty—nay, some forty years," he added, seeing the old gentleman's eye flash at the name of duty, and willing to lead him away from the impressions produced by an ill-chosen word ; for Mr. Williamson was a practical physiognomist, as far as reading accurately and rapidly the expressions as they passed over the countenances of those with whom he spoke went, and adapting his own words and conduct to the emotions he perceived there. "It is a long acquaintance, Colonel, and I think you never had cause to find fault with me before ; and in this business, I am sure you cannot suspect me of any latent design of injuring the family, into which it is my strongest wish, and would be my greatest pride, that my son and heir should marry."

"What are your motives sir," replied Colonel Adair, "I do not and cannot discover. Your actions in this instance speak for themselves. As, however, sir, you have again referred to my daughter, let me say, that where her happiness is concerned I shall never make any opposition. I have paid so dear for happiness of the same kind myself, that I value it too highly to trifle with that of my child. Your son has occasionally seen a good deal of her. What may be her feelings towards him I cannot tell, for I have not spoken to her on the subject; but to-morrow I will

take an opportunity of doing so. Her wishes shall have full influence ; but if I find that they do not lead her in the way you suppose, I must desire the acquaintance to be dropped : and now, sir, I will wish you good morning, for my horse is at the door, and regimental business calls me hence."

The tone, the look, the manner, did not admit a word more, and the only consideration for Mr. Williamson was, whether he should sulk, or bully, or enact injured innocence. The latter expedient prevailed, as was chosen ; and exclaiming with a sigh, " Well, Colonel ! well ! you will one day do me justice !" he took his hat and left the room. " We shall get matters brought round," he thought ; " the old colonel is a hasty man, but it is like a wood fire—his anger very hot, and very bright, and very soon over : and now for the post office ; I wonder if they have sent me the newspapers ?" They had not ; and when he applied at the post, only one thick letter, written on thick paper, sealed with a large splatchy seal, and containing evidently another sheet, was handed to him, with a demand upon his purse which made him give the writer to the devil. He was too cautious a man to open a letter in the streets, and he therefore waited till he had reached his own hotel, and his own room therein. There, however, he shut the door and broke the seal, when, to his surprise, horror, and astonishment, he read the following words :

" Messrs. Strongbotham, Steadygo, and Standfast present their compliments to Mr. Williamson, and beg to forward to him the inclosed from Lord Methwyn, and to inform him, that as his lordship is pleased to place his future law business in their hands, they will be obliged to him if he will cause to be prepared a clear statement of his account since the last settlement, in order to its speedy and final arrangement. Messrs. S., S., and S. also request that Mr. Williamson, as soon as he can make it convenient to return to England, would have the goodness to hand over to them all leases, contracts, covenants, agreements, wills, testaments, marriage-settlements, papers, memoranda, accounts, statements, bills in chancery, deeds, papers, and documents of every kind, sort, and description whatsoever, belonging to Lord Methwyn, which he may happen to have in his care or custody at this present time."

" Ruin !" murmured Mr. Williamson, " ruin ! clear two

thousand a-year out of pocket ;" and mechanically he opened the inclosure from Lord Methwyn. It contained but few words, and was to the following effect:—" Mr. Williamson having thought fit not only to act to a tenant of Lord Methwyn in a far more severe manner than any directions authorized him to do, but also, in order to screen himself, having chosen to calumniate his employer, he cannot be surprised that Lord Methwyn is determined to remove his agency and law business from his hands. He is accordingly desired to render his accounts since June last, and to give over all papers he may possess of Lord Methwyn's to Messrs. Strongbotham, Steadygo, and Standfast, solicitors, No.—, Gray's Inn."

" That cursed old rascal has been my ruin," cried Mr. Williamson, " but by —— I'll be revenged on him. He does not know how much I have him in my power. But I will make him pay for what he takes away now, or I will know the reason why. I won't wait a minute—I will go directly: but I had better answer these letters first, too ;" and down he sat to reply in a calm tone of professional plausibility to the antagonist lawyers, while to Lord Methwyn he answered in a different manner, humbly assuring him that he had been misrepresented and traduced, that though of course he bowed humbly to his lordship's decision, yet being taken quite by surprise, and engaged in Brussels in pursuing a matter of infinite consequence, he could not at the moment fulfil his lordship's wishes. In the mean time he declared that he had not a word to say against his Lordship's resolution, and yet he believed that if allowed to justify himself, he could in short say a great deal against it.

Now, in truth, Mr. John Williamson, attorney-at-law, did not in the least imagine, or believe that any thing he could say would alter Lord Methwyn's decision. He had known the peer some twenty years, and he was a shrewd and observing man, so that he knew those parts of Lord Methwyn's character, which had rubbed against himself in professional matters, as well as the peer did himself. He was well aware then that his lordship was not a person to be moved by solicitations, deceived by unproved assertions, or taken in by affected contritions and apology. With Lord Methwyn he could neither bully, nor cajole, nor finesse. The only thing he had ever seen act upon his lordship as a sedative was time, and to time he determined to leave him,

avoiding all further communication with Messrs. Strongbotham, Steadygo, and Standfast as he would have done with a pest-house, and providing diligently against the worst *future* that could possibly happen, by an active employment of the golden *present*.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEARLY about the same time that Mr. Williamson approached the door of Colonel Adair's dwelling, Adjutant Green walked up—or rather marched up—for his whole demeanour, step, carriage, countenance, was not only that of a military man, but of a military man in the actual exercise of his profession, determined to break the square opposed to him, or carry the scarcely practicable breach, or scale the well-defended wall—he marched up then to the door of the handsome house which Lady Mary Denham tenanted in Brussels, and bringing his left shoulder forward, rang at the bell. There was a carriage at the door, as if waiting for the ladies to go out, but Adjutant Green did not mind that. There was a speech lurking in his throat behind the *velum pendulum palati*, and there was determination in his countenance—and as we have said, he marched up to the door, brought his left shoulder forward, and rang the bell. When a servant appeared, he first asked for Miss Adair, as her idea happened to be uppermost in his mind at the moment; but being told that she was out, he paused to revolve whom he should next demand to see. Lady Mary Denham was in some degree awful to Adjutant Green; not that mortal man could ever have discovered the slightest touch of haughtiness in her demeanour; not that she was not kind and condescending, gentle and affable; but there was a sort of blaze of brightness about her—her dazzling beauty, her splendid style of dress, her high-toned manners, and her commanding air, joined to a knowledge of her station in society—which prevented any people born in an inferior station, from ever forgetting her rank, however kindly and tenderly she might treat them. Adjutant Green felt very differently towards Miss Adair, though she was even more perfectly beautiful and far more bewitchingly lovely than her fair cousin. Though hers was a beauty that

at the first sight made the breath come short with surprise and admiration, yet there was a tender softness in her very look—a deep and feeling soul in her shaded eyes, the tendency of which was all calm and tranquillizing. Her dress also, though full of taste, and up to the best point of fashion, was less splendid in material and decoration than that which Lady Mary felt she had a right—nay, believed herself bound to wear ; and besides all this, the soldier looked upon her as the soldier's child, and there was a point of sympathy open for the passage of all kindly feelings. Thus, when he found that Helen Adair was out, he paused to consider whether he should ask for Lady Mary Denham, or his own niece Louisa. He was going to speak about other people's business, however, and therefore Louisa was not the fit person ; but ere he could decide, the servant brought the controversy in his mind to a close by repeating that Miss Adair had gone out to see sights with Lady Mary, but that Lady Pontypool was at home, though she too was going out directly. Lady Pontypool was the very person. He had heard her call Miss Adair her cousin Helen, and her dear child, and a great many other kindly names ; he knew that she was very much loved and esteemed by every body, and as there was nothing at all lawful in my Aunt Pontypool, he begged to see her for two minutes.

There was nobody in the drawing-room, and Adjutant Green walked to the window with his sabre under his arm, and gazed out. The moment after, there was the creaking of a pair of old lady's shoes, and turning round, he found himself in the presence of my Aunt Pontypool. Now adjutant Green had a good deal to say, but when taken out of the regular routine of regimental business, with the simple exception of a few animated, soul-stirring words upon the field of battle, which he got heaven know's whence or how, if it were not from the depths of his own lion-like heart—he was anything but an eloquent man, as the reader is doubtless by this time fully aware. He had no talent for explanation, however short, or for narration, however simple ; and a sort of consciousness that this was the case, a struggling after brevity, a fondness for axioms of which he possessed one, and a belief that nothing which he knew himself could be unknown to his hearers, generally deprived his orations of every thing like perspicuity. On the other hand, Lady Pontypool was one of those people who

have in their own minds an explanation ready for every thing that is said to them,—dark or pellucid, conveyed in a hint, or explained at length, they are sure to find a meaning in it right or wrong ; and that not from an overweening vanity in their own powers of comprehension, but from a tender consideration for the feelings of others, prevented them from offering such an insult to any one's powers of narration, as to ask for a farther elucidation of an obscure tale. It may easily be conceived, therefore, that of all people on the earth, two persons could hardly have been chosen less likely to understand each other, than Adjutant Charles Green, and the Dowager Lady Pontypool.

The lady pointed to a chair, and declared that she was very happy to see Mr. Green, hoped that he was quite recovered, and asked when he had arrived at Brussels. He, on his part, sat down with his foraging-cap in his left hand, his right foot and leg extended, his left drawn under the chair, and his sabre still under his left arm. In this position, and with the line of his back forming an angle of forty-five with the upright back of the chair as he stooped forward to bring the organ of speech nearer to Lady Pontypool, from whom he had seated himself at a respectful distance, he proceeded to reply politely to her polite inquiries. He then added, though he should certainly have come to offer his thanks for the kindness which had been shown him at Ghent, he had, on the present occasion, a little bit of business to speak of. As Lady Pontypool had no apprehensions of a proposal, she merely bowed her head with an approving smile, and he proceeded.

“I wished to speak to you, my lady,” he said, “about that dear pretty young lady, Miss Adair, who is so kind and gentle, my little Louisa says.”

“Ay, that she is, indeed !” answered Lady Pontypool with affectionate warmth, “she is as amiable and sweet-tempered a young person as any in the world, and would do as much good as any one if she had but the means, poor girl.”

“Ay ! that's what I was thinking,” replied Adjutant Green. “I was afraid that she and the old Colonel were but poorly off, and that's what I call very hard ; I don't see why that should be at all.”

“No, nor I either, Mr. Green,” replied Lady Pontypool in a sad tone, “but you know we must not arraign the in-

scrutable decrees of Providence." Adjutant Green remained puzzled, and Lady Pontypool went on. "I myself have been subjected to terrible vicissitudes in this state of being, but I try to bear my affliction with perfect resignation to the will of the Almighty, who knows what is best for me."

"He is commander-in-chief, madam," replied Adjutant Green, "and I know better than to grumble at his orders. Our duty is to obey, and I am sure the Colonel knows better than to say a word; but if I understand you right, my lady, you meant to say they had had losses—the Colonel, I mean."

"Oh, sad losses indeed!" replied Lady Pontypool; "he lost his wife, poor thing, some four or five years ago; a sweet creature she was, and he mourned for her very much, though she cost him his fortune, poor man."

"Ay, indeed!" cried Green, as if a new light were breaking upon him, "so that was it. Why, you see, my lady, I thought it was very strange-like, and just this morning I heard that old scoundrel Williamson, talking in a very scoundrelly way, it struck me, to that young scoundrel his son. I began to suspect something wrong, do you see, my Lady Pontypool, for I knew all about the matter long ago, and I thought it very likely that the old rascal—that is Williamson, might be cogging to cheat the good Colonel and his daughter; do you understand my lady?"

"Oh, quite well, quite well," replied Lady Pontypool. "He is, I believe, a very bad man indeed, that Williamson, at least I have heard Charles say so, and I dare say he is capable of cheating anybody; I am sure he looks it; but I wonder how to prevent it, for I am sure I would do anything I could to put poor Helen more at her ease, for she is a dear, sweet girl indeed."

"Why, as for the matter of putting her more at her ease, poor young lady," replied he, "here's her father's first-cousin, Lord Adair, in this very city; I saw him and his son yesterday. He's running over with riches they tell me, and I don't see why ——"

He paused and hesitated, and Lady Pontypool chimed in. "I am sure if I could do anything I would, Mr. Green, and I am very much obliged to you for speaking to me about it. Lord Adair is a relation of mine and of Mary's too, and if you thought I could do anything, and would only tell me how to set about it.——"

"Why, my lady, I would go and see how the land lies," answered he. "I would go and ask you know ! If all's right ; why, well, no harm's done ; but your ladyship knows much better about the matter than I do. You can judge yourself ; I only think, why, here's the one rolling in riches, and the other in poverty—that's all."

"Oh, I'll go—I have no objections to go," said Lady Pontypool, "I'll go this minute, but only do tell me, Mr. Green, what would you have me say."

"Why, ma'am" replied he, "why, really I don't know. Why, I'd just say to him, 'If you're a gentleman as I take you to be, behave as such, and act according-ly.'"

"So I will, I declare," said Lady Pontypool, plucking up courage at the words put into her mouth. "So I will, I declare—but tell me, Mr. Green, whereabouts my cousin Adair lives, and I will go directly, for the sooner a disagreeable thing is over, the better. The carriage is at the door, and I have nothing else to do."

Adjutant Green, if he could not tell a story very clearly, had been too long accustomed to give and obey orders not to be able to afford a clear direction ; and, consequently, rising up before Lady Pontypool, and letting his sabre drop by his side, he told her where to drive in search of Lord Adair in the true word-of-command tone ; but as she seemed still to have some doubt as to the retentive powers of her brain in such matters, he took a pen, and in a good clerk-like hand, which none could write better than himself, he put down the address. He then brought his right shoulder forward, saluted Lady Pontypool, forced the pass between a sofa-table, two chaise-longues, and a china jar, and effected his retreat by the door in a very soldier-like and masterly manner, feeling that in the interview just over he had achieved a seat as gallant and daring as that of Norman Ramsay at Fuentes d'Onoro. He could not resist his desire of seeing his little niece Louisa, however, and for her therefore he inquired after his interview with Lady Pontypool. Quick and rapid in all his movements, he did not stay long with her ; but finding that she was very happy, and that she wrote to her mother every thing that happened, without reserve or concealment, he called her a good little girl, and returned to other duties.

In the meanwhile, Lady Pontypool proceeded to her carriage, and her carriage proceeded in search of Lord Adair,

turning through a number of small streets, till at length it stopped at the door of a house between a petty restaurant and a lace-shop. Lady Pontypool thought of her cousin's princely fortune, and looked up at the dwelling, which was neither princely nor gentlemanly ; but the bell being rung, and a little sickly-looking, dirty girl having run out from the ground floor, which was inhabited by boot-makers, and from which issued forth a dull thumping of leather and a smell of tan, Lady Pontypool was told that there was a Milor lodging on the first floor, and that she would find a bell. She accordingly mounted the stairs, followed by a footman ; and there at the first landing-place, she certainly did find a long thick cord, with a knot at the end thereof, which, on being pulled, produced a sound within the room beyond, not unlike that of the bell wherewith one wether is generally tormented in every flock of sheep. A French manservant opened the door, and in answer to her inquiries, informed her that Lord Adair was within, and she was accordingly ushered into his presence.

Now Lady Pontypool had not seen Lord Adair for many years ; and when she had seen him, he was a tall, thin, good-looking man, of forty-five or fifty, with a narrow, keen-looking countenance, having but little contour in it ; but at the same time, with fine dark eyes enough, good teeth, and well formed features. She could hardly have recognized the person before her, when she entered the little salon in which he was sitting. He was still tall, of course, but now his meagreness was excessive ; and a rounded bow of the backbone, drawing in his stomach and chest, made him look still more thin and miserable. He was approaching the age of seventy, but his old age was no way green. His cheeks were pale, and somewhat withered, and his thin white hair fell flat and lanky over his forehead and ears. His eyes were still fine, but the good teeth were gone, and the sharp and prominent nose had been left standing alone, from the desertion of the cheeks by which it had at one time been kept in countenance. In point of dress, his lordship was below his station. He had a large white muslin cravat bound round his neck in manifold folds, making the throat look somewhat thicker than the head which surmounted it : and to this he added a well-cut blue coat, rather old, but still good ; and a yellow waistcoat, which had been often washed. Nevertheless, no one could

mistake him for any think but a gentleman by birth and education; and when he saw Lady Pontypool he laid down his pen, closed a folio book of figures to which he had been adding, and led the good old lady to a chair with the suavity and grace of days gone by. He recollects her immediately, though the attempt at announcing her name made by his French servant, only served to shadow her identity in mystery. But, as we have said, he recollects her immediately, for Lady Pontypool was a flower which had gone through all the seasons of life—ay, and had stood the wind and tempest too—but very little withered; so that the sight of her called up in the breast of the old lord many of the memories of other days, and some of the expansive feelings of youth.

The conversation was soon begun under such circumstances, and Lord Adair apologized for not having waited upon Lady Pontypool when he was last in London; “But, to tell the truth,” he said, “since my poor wife’s death, I have given up all society; and, indeed, having no one to look after my affairs but myself, I find plenty to do, and the necessity of proper economy in my expences compels me to limit very much my intercourse with the world.”

“But, my good lord and cousin,” replied Lady Pontypool, “I always thought you were very happily situated in point of fortune—I thought you were rich.”

“Rich!” cried he, “Oh no, no, indeed, you are quite mistaken! and, besides, there are so many expenses which are not apparent to the eye of the general world, that even were I rich—which heaven knows I am not—I should find means of spending all that I ought to spend, and more too, a great deal.”

“Indeed!” said Lady Pontypool, her hopes in Helen’s favour beginning to cool. “I thought, as your family was so small, that you had plenty of money to spare, my lord!”

“Money to spare!” cried he with a laugh, “good Lady Pontypool, how could you dream of such a thing? you forget my son, a young man now of two-and-twenty. He must have this thing he must have that; he must have his servant (though I am sure one servant could do very well for him and me); he must have his horse—not that I mean to say he is not a very good boy—a very good boy indeed; and his only passion is running about the country, but even

travelling in diligences and stage coaches is very expensive. He costs me full six hundred a-year, one way or another, and I cannot live for much less myself."

"Six hundred a-year, my dear cousin!" cried Lady Pontypool, "when I know you have upwards of forty thousand per annum yourself. Is it not true?"

"Forty thousand per annum!" cried the peer, "not so much, not so much; I am sure I have not near forty thousand per annum—no, not near, all deductions made."

Now good Lady Pontypool was in no shape or way a woman of the world; but, nevertheless, she had heard more than once of her worthy cousin's avarice, and his words were so very little like truth, that even *she* saw the miser peeping through his thin disguise, and her spirit was aroused to fight the battles of poor Helen Adair. She therefore replied, "Well, well, my good lord, we will not talk of a thousand or two, but it is clear to me that you have a great deal more than you want, and I am come to speak to you about a young relation, who has a great deal less than she ought. Do you know that Helen Adair, the daughter of your cousin, the Colonel, is now living with my niece Mary Denham, and that she and her father both are not in the situation they ought to be, if right and justice had been done them?"

Lord Adair turned first as white as a piece of Coleraine linen, then as red as a chimney-pot, and then as brown as brown holland. He stared at Lady Pontypool—he gasped; and she, knowing that there are many men who are highly indignant at having poor relations, was angry with him in her turn, and went on in a way that did not at all tend to calm or tranquillize him. "You know very well, my lord," she continued, "that the Colonel ought to have had the India fortune, while you had the family estates; I know all that story as well as you do yourself, and therefore the least you can do now is to come forward and put your relatives at their ease—so I think, and there are other people that think so too."

Lord Adair rubbed his spectacles upon his sleeve, and then demanded in a low tone, "And pray, Lady Pontypool, what persons do you allude to—I mean who was it prompted you to honour me with this visit, and to speak in these terms? Was it Colonel Adair himself, or his daughter, or who?"

"It was neither," replied the old lady, "for they know nothing about it; but it was some one who seems to understand the whole matter too;" and for the first time she began to wonder how Adjutant Green did understand the whole so well—"it was no other than Adjutant Green of the——dragoons."

Lord Adair started up with such violence that he overthrew the chair behind him, which broke its own back in the fall; and though with inveterate habit, more strong than nature herself, he picked up the piece of furniture, and re-adjusted the fractured parts as skilfully as if he had been all his life a surgeon to old mahogany; yet the moment he had done, agitation again took possession of him, and he ended his interrupted start by walking vehemently up and down the room.

At length, pausing opposite to Lady Pontypool, he asked her in a tone less agitated than his manner, but shaken and low nevertheless, "Pray madam, what did he say?"

"Why, my lord," she replied, "he said that if you were a gentleman, as every one knows you are, you would show yourself one on the present occasion."

There was a sufficient smack of Adjutant Green left in Lady Pontypool's version of his speech to show Lord Adair whence it came; and, again very much agitated, he paced the room, till prudence began to get the better of surprise, and sitting down he remained for a moment or two silent, while Lady Pontypool having exhausted her eloquence, did the wisest thing she ever had done in her life, and remained silent also.

"Well, madam," he said at length, "this is an extraordinary application after such a length of time. Let me know what you wish me to do?"

Now Lady Pontypool had not exactly considered that question, and like many a much more capricious person than her own good self, she did not exactly know what she wished, "Why," she said at length, "why, I think you had better see the colonel yourself, my lord."

"That I cannot do, madam," he replied, "for if I willingly see him I lose the whole property at once—so you see that's impossible—it would be giving it up outright!"

"Well, then, my lord," said Lady Pontypool, a bright thought striking her, "the prohibition does not affect your

son. Let him see Colonel Adair, and speak upon the business."

"My son—my son—" said Lord Adair, hesitating—"no, my son does not know anything of—of—business—and I am sure I do not know how to—"

"Well, but my lord," cried Lady Pontypool, her bright thought brightening into one of her brightest plans, "well, but my lord, suppose that your son were to see Miss Adair. I declare that is the best scheme after all—for Helen is one of the most beautiful girls that you can conceive, and if they were to fall in love with one another, which is very likely, how delightful that would be!—I am sure that you would like your son to marry."

"Certainly," replied Lord Adair; and after a moment's thought, during which the expense of weddings, and the necessary settlements upon his son balanced themselves against a thousand other considerations, he added, "certainly, I have always wished him to marry for the sake of keeping up the family, and I dare say this Miss Adair is a good manager too, being brought up on but little; and then too, it will set the other affair at rest as you say—indeed, I think it not a bad plan, Lady Pontypool," and he rubbed his hands while meditating its advantages; but then he added, "I think however it will be as well to suspend all discussion, and not to say a word to my son about the matter, but just to let him meet his fair cousin in society, and we may try quietly to bring about a match between them, without mentioning the India fortune at all."

"Oh, certainly, certainly," replied Lady Pontypool, delighted with her own plan and its success so far; but at the same time, desirous of displaying what knowledge of human nature she possessed, she added, "we had better not mention such a thing as a match even to either party, for I have always remarked, that that is the very way to prevent such a thing from proceeding. Now there is Charles Lacy, who will undoubtedly marry Mary—if I had not taken the greatest pains to prevent it being talked of to either the one or the other it would have all been spoiled."

Lord Adair agreed with her in these views perfectly, and he farther added, that he expected the return of his son every moment, so that if Lady Pontypool would stay a few minutes he could be introduced to her at once. To this she readily consented, determined in her own mind to bring

about the first meeting between Helen and her young relative as speedily as possible. She waited then very anxiously for the appearance of Young Henry Adair, longing to see whether his personal appearance would afford a good foundation for that love which she had pre-resolved that Helen should conceive for him. She was not long kept in suspense, for the young man was already behind the time which he had promised to rejoin his father, and in a few minutes a hasty step running up the stairs, and a loud ringing at the bell, spoke his arrival. The next moment he entered the room, and Lady Pontypool was satisfied. He was a slight young man, not very tall, but still above the middle height, very well and very gracefully formed, and, as was the case with all his family, bearing *gentleman* written in legible characters upon his brow. His face was peculiarly handsome, his eyes large and dark, the rest of his features small, his chin rounded, and, if anything, a little too projecting, his brow broad and noble, and the dark clustering black hair flowing round it in soft massy curls. His complexion was brown and rather pale, and his beard was strongly marked for one so young, while his whiskers, dark and curling, had been suffered to grow, though to no immoderate length. He paused when he saw Lady Pontypool, but then again advanced to the table, and leaning his bent knuckles upon it, with his person gracefully inclined, he turned his dark lustrous eyes upon his father for a moment in silence, with a look of thoughtful affection, while, upon the shrunk and sharp features of the old peer rested an expression of proud satisfaction, which explained sufficiently to Lady Pontypool the silence which he kept also.

"I have come back, sir, if you want me," said the son at length: "I shall remain in the next room till you are ready."

"No, no, Harry!" said his father; "you must stay here. This is a relation of ours, kindly come to visit me. This is Lady Pontypool. Lady Pontypool, permit me to introduce to you my son Henry."

The good lady gave him her hand, expressing how much pleasure she had in seeing him, and the young man, taking a seat beside her, entered at once into conversation, with considerable powers of language, but with an original and peculiar train of ideas, expressed without the least apparent consciousness of singularity, but as if their was a necessity

of their being spoken, which he himself had no power to resist.

"You are in the army, I think," said Lady Pontypool; and then remarking his garb, which had nothing military in it, she added, "at least somebody told me so."

"They were mistaken," replied he mildly; "I have no vocation that way. My father, I believe, would have liked me to serve, as it is called,—is it not so, sir?—but I did not choose it. I neither liked bloodshed, nor to serve at all. I believe I am as brave as any other man," he added with a smile. "I would risk my life as soon to save that of another, or to do any good—perhaps to do any evil that pleased me; but wholesale throat-cutting is not a diversion in my eyes. I should like the stimulus, the excitement of a battle, perhaps, but I would take no part therein for worlds."

"Oh, but it would be very foolish to go near a battle," cried Lady Pontypool, "unless you were obliged to have something to do with it. There could be no pleasure in that, surely?"

"Oh, I do not know that," replied he, "there is more pleasure in a certain degree of danger than in the most complete security. At least I believe so. Indeed, I am not sure that modifications of the feelings of danger do not form the true source of all our most refined enjoyments.—When I see a tragedy, the pleasure I experience is derived from putting myself in the place of the people who are likely to suffer, and by apprehending as their representative, the danger that is impending. Tragedies which involve no danger—no suffering in short to characters that we can love, excite no interest in me. Richard the Third, for instance, has no great charms in my eyes. I feel a little for Lady Anne, but I do not care enough for her to feel any great apprehension on her account; and therefore do not experience that deputed sensation of danger which constitutes the pleasure in my opinion."

"Well, that is very droll," replied Lady Pontypool; "I do not know why I feel pleased at a tragedy—indeed I do not think I am pleased, though I suppose I ought to be—but one thing I know is, that I never felt any pleasure in danger, in my life. Quite the contrary. I think fear the most uncomfortable sensation in the world. I do not like it at all!"

"But it must not go the length of fear," replied the other, "it would then I suppose lose all its delight; for fear must be a very terrible sensation—if there be such a thing. I should like to see somebody very much afraid. Though I cannot understand how any one can ever be foolish enough to feel fear; for the very worst thing that can happen to a man, is a thing that is happening round us every day, is familiar to our sight, and our feelings; and ought to be familiar to our expectations—I mean death—a thing that has nothing fearful in itself; that must happen to us once; and which rightly considered is a curious matter for speculation, but not for fear. On my word, I do not see why we should not regard death as a most interesting experiment, and be glad to make it!"

"Dear me!" cried Lady Pontypool, who had never heard such a doctrine in her life before: "I am sure to me, the very sight of death is terrible. The sight of a dead person is in my eyes the most appalling thing that it is possible to conceive."

"But you never felt that sensation at the sight of a dead sheep at a butcher's door," said Mr. Adair; "and yet, my dear madam, the one is as much the image of death as the other. A boiled fowl, or a haunch of venison, never gives any fearful tremblings to the same man who shudders at a hearse and all its nodding plumes; and yet a few days before, life, ~~and~~ all the energy of life, was as bright in the creatures he devours, as in himself. Death has no terrors, my dear lady, but in our own imaginations."

Lord Adair spoke not, but looked on, proud and pleased; and Lady Pontypool, who did not understand one half, thought it all very odd but very clever, and ended the discussion by asking her young cousin to dinner on the following day, which invitation he accepted, and then handed her to her carriage.

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MY AUNT PONTYPOOL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:

E. L. CAREY & A. HART—CHESNUT STREET.

1836,

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MY AUNT PONTYPOOL.

CHAPTER I.

AND now, while Lady Pontypool returned home, proud and well pleased with all the little arrangements she had made, and perfectly sure that Helen would fall in love with Henry Adair the moment she beheld him, that gentleman sat waiting for his father, who occupied the first five minutes after Lady Pontypool's departure, in preparations to go out. Henry Adair looked round the small room, gazed upon the large folio of accounts, thought of *all that should be*, in his father's situation, and drew a deep sigh. "It is a disease," he thought, "it is a disease, and, unhappily, one for which there is no cure." But Henry Adair's love for his father was very great, and though he saw and felt most painfully the avarice of the miser, yet he never forgot that the miser was his father, and a father who loved him even better than his gold. He felt no inclination to spend—or rather to lavish, the sordid trash which the other found such delight in hoarding, for he was not of a profuse and extravagant disposition; but he did wish that his father would sometimes assume the appearance that besitted his station, and make that use of money which his wealth rendered a duty. Sometimes, too, the son made a strong effort to induce him so to act, when any especial case required it, and he did occasionally succeed; but he saw that the pain he inflicted upon his father was so great, whenever he argued him into any extraordinary expense, that he refrained as far as possible. For himself, he was contented with very little, and he was well pleased so far to make a sacrifice to his father's feelings, as never to strive for the means of keeping up those expenses which might well become the son of a

peer ; but still he would not relinquish that which became a gentleman of moderate fortune, and thus the line of agreement was drawn between the father and the son. Yet never could Henry Adair think of his father without bitter regret, to behold qualities which might have secured respect and esteem, if they could not have gained high reverence and excited strong admiration, lost in the one sad decrepid passion which benumbed every better feeling. That regret, too, which he thus reasonably felt, had acted upon himself in a less reasonable manner, having generated a sort of despair of ever seeing his father act a different part : and, believing—nay hoping—that it might be long ere he himself were called to administer that income which his parent only thought of saving, he had given himself up to a wayward and careless mood, which acting on a character naturally hasty and original, had rendered him heedless of many of the common proprieties of society. His manners were always gentlemanly, but his actions were almost always eccentric ; and by all who knew him he was regarded as a very clever, but a very odd young man. Yet this peculiarity did not arise from any contempt, real or assumed, for the forms he violated, or for the opinions of others. It was, that he forgot forms and rules when any strong emotion agitated him, and did the most extraordinary things in the most gentlemanly manner ; and in regard to the opinion of others, whenever he found any one whom he could really respect or love—which of course was seldom—his feelings towards them acquired a sort of reverential awe, which made him hang upon every word as if it were law. This, it need hardly be said, was not the case with his father. What he felt towards him was tenderness. It was love returned, but it was not respect, though it made his whole conduct assume the outward appearance of that impression ; but his own heart was too noble to permit of his feeling reverence for any one who could grovel in the golden mud of avarice.

In about five minutes after Lady Pontypool had left the house, Lord Adair rejoined his son with his hat in his hand ; and was in the act of listening to an account of a very pleasant ride down through the little village of Ixelles which Henry proposed for their morning's excursion, when a loud ringing at the bell announced some new visitor. Ere Lord Adair could give orders to say he was engaged, the servant who had been waiting to give his master exit,

opened the door and announced Mr. Williamson. Lord Adair laid his hat and stick upon the table, less annoyed at the interruption than the son, and after welcoming Mr. Williamson with a degree of profound familiarity, he said, "Well, Harry, you had better go and take your ride alone, for I have a good deal of business to transact with our friend here."

"Where is your son John," demanded Henry Adair, addressing the lawyer, without other salutation: "I will make him ride with me. I am not in a humour for riding alone to-day."

Mr. Williamson told him where to find his son, and the young gentleman walked out of the room muttering to himself, "A fool may do me good to-day. I want something to irritate me and compel me to control my temper."

Lord Adair heard the door close and the clatter of the horse's hoofs on the pavement before he opened his lips on the business to which he had alluded, but when his son was certainly gone, he exclaimed, "Now sit down, Williamson, sit down! Something very extraordinary has happened to-day. Lady Pontypool has been here!"

"The devil she has!" cried the lawyer. "I thought as much. I thought there was some mischief brewing by the impudent questions she asked me yesterday. But tell me, my Lord, who has been prompting her, and how much does she know?"

"Why, Green has been prompting her; Charles Green, an ungrateful scoundrel! and as to how much she knows, I am sure I cannot well tell. She seemed to know a great deal; but of course she did not speak out fully. She gave a great many hints and inuendoes, and in fact said, she knew as much about the matter as I did myself. She said too, that I knew very well the India fortune should have gone to my cousin Charles, and a great deal more in that strain."

Williamson paused for a moment or two, and then replied, "That might all be done to cover ignorance.—She is deep, my lord! devilish deep, that old woman!" he continued; for cunning people always believe persons whose characters puzzle them, to be actuated by the same class of motives as themselves. "She is deep, devilish deep! you should have pumped her, and fished out what she really knew—perhaps not much, after all?"

"But I am not so good either at pumping or fishing, *as*

you call it," replied Lord Adair, a slight tone of scorn mingling with his repetition of the lawyer's terms.

"I doubt though that she knows much, after all," reiterated the lawyer; "for she would have bolted it out, depend upon it, in order to frighten you to do what she wanted; and of course she did not come here without an object, whatever it was?"

"As far as I could understand," replied Lord Adair, "her object was neither more nor less than to induce me to give up the property, or at least part of it, to my cousin Charles. But, to tell the truth, I was so taken by surprise, and confused on the occasion, that I neither knew what to answer, nor was prepared to examine minutely what she had discovered, or what she wanted. All that I could think of was to put the whole discussion off till I could speak with you about it."

"Quite right! quite right!" said the lawyer; "you are always quite right, my lord;—and after all, what can Green do? nothing at all! There is nothing but his bare oath, and he may swear till he is black in the face, it will not conjure sixpence out of your pocket. Very disagreeable, no doubt; but he can do nothing. There is his single oath against our two oaths,—and which is the best, I should ask?"

"Ay, but I should not like to swear," replied the peer. "No, I should not like to swear at all, Williamson. Besides, suppose that other fellow were to turn up!"

"He is as dead as a herring, my lord!" replied Williamson; "I spoke with the serjeant himself, who reported him killed. As I told you before, he was shot through the head in the Peninsula; but even if he were alive, that would be nothing you know, my lord:" he added, approaching the peer, and speaking in a low but emphatic voice; "they must produce it; they must produce it, before they could make out a case which the court would even hear. Let them produce it if they can! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed loud and triumphantly.

Lord Adair, however, who valued his reputation at a higher rate than Mr. Williamson could do, did not seem quite satisfied with his worthy friend's consolations. "Do you know," he said, "do you know, Williamson, I often wish I had never done it; it would have been a terrible loss! a great loss, indeed—four-and-twenty thousand pounds per annum, at least! but yet, sometimes I wish I had not done it."

"Well, my lord!" replied Williamson, somewhat sulkily, "it is no business of mine you know."

"No business of yours, sir!" answered the peer in a sharp tone; "why you proposed it to me yourself—you arranged the whole affair, and burnt it yourself."

"Well, my lord," rejoined the lawyer, while a sly and meaning smile stole over his coarse features, "the matter is very easily remedied if your lordship pleases; you have nothing to do but give up the property. That is what I meant by saying, 'it is no business of mine.' You can give up the property and pay the back-rents, and say it was all a mistake; and if you think any compensation necessary for having kept it so long, you can give twenty or thirty thousand over."

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried the peer; "do you think I am mad, or drivelling? But I'll tell you what, Williamson—old Lady Pontypool—whom I never thought so clever a woman as she turns out—old Lady Pontypool has proposed a plan which will remove all discomforts, and set matters straight again. I have resolved to agree to it, and so to have my heart at ease the rest of my life, and to be no longer tormented with fears and anxieties, or uncomfortable recollections. For more than twenty years, I have not known a moment's real peace of mind, Williamson!"

"But what does the old woman propose then?" demanded the lawyer eagerly; "I thought you said, my lord, that she wished you to give back the India property as far as you could make out: you told me so not a minute ago."

"I did so," answered Lord Adair, "because it was about that she talked at first; and I should of course have gone on to find out fully what she did mean, if she had not suddenly made a proposal which did away all difficulties, and opened a clear and straightforward way of settling the matter for ever."

"And pray what may this miraculous way be?" demanded the lawyer, not a little anxious to hear—for the reader must have already perceived that the attorney had a certain hold of the old peer, which he would have been very unwilling to lose by the intervention of Lady Pontypool, or any other intervention whatsoever; especially at a moment when the goodly agency of Lord Methwyn's estates—the comfortable crumbs of his law business, and the sundry perquisites and conveniences thence to be drawn—had all

slipped from his grasp, melting down at once like a snow-ball in the fire.

"I'll tell you, Williamson! I'll tell you!" rejoined the peer, putting on his spectacles with a satisfied look; "I'll tell you!—Lady Pontypool proposed that my son, Henry, should end the whole matter by marrying the daughter of my cousin Charles Adair."

Mr. Williamson sat for a moment with his mouth open, in horror, astonishment, and apprehension; and as soon as he had recovered his speech, that mouth had nearly given utterance to the words, "the mischief-making old witch!" He had sufficient command over himself, however, to stop short at the definite article; and thus, for a moment or two, "the!" stood alone, for the first time in its life, as a regular interjection. Late and tardily he went on to add to it a very different train of followers, making it out, "the _____ de-
vit she did! Well, my lord, I must say she's a cool hand, to propose to your lordship to marry your son, with his splendid prospects, to a girl without a sixpence—without a brass farthing! Why, my lord, you would have to pay for her wedding-clothes! You did not surely consent to that!"

"Indeed I did," replied the peer, in a tone of determination which made the lawyer's countenance fall; "indeed I did!—and I will tell you more, Williamson; I shall not go back from my resolution."

"Just as your lordship pleases," replied the lawyer; "just as your lordship pleases; but, I wish you would let me reason the matter with you for a moment. Only hear what I have to say against this scheme."

"Oh, I will hear any thing you like," answered Lord Adair, in a sort of tone which a man uses when he is prepared to resist every argument, right or wrong; "I am quite willing to hear all that can be said against it, or for it."

"Well then, my lord, continued the lawyer, addressing his arguments with the skill acquired by habitual dealing with men's weaknesses, to the peculiar passion which he knew to predominate in the peer's nature—"well then it does seem to me a very strange, and even an impudent proposal of this old lady! Why, here a handsome young man like your son, the only child of a peer of large fortune, very clever, and agreeable to women, might expect any day, when he chose to marry, a fortune of six or seven thousand a-year with his wife, instead of nothing at all.

There is Miss Simcox, the banker's daughter, with at least half a million, and Miss Brown, the great contractor's only child with more, both handsome girls, well-bred, and educated, would only be too proud and happy to marry your son ; while I could point out a dozen of heiresses in the higher classes, with less fortunes perhaps, but better blood, who would be glad enough to secure the coronet, and a handsome husband into the bargain."

" And then we offend Lady Pontypool, and have all this story blazed all over the world, with Green's oath to the truth of it!" replied the peer ; and what would be the consequences of that ? why, I tell you Williamson ; if my son heard it but whispered that such a thing was the case, I should never see his face again as long as I lived ; and all your fine schemes for marrying him to an heiress would go to nought. Besides, man—besides, I have heard him declare that he would never marry any woman who possessed more than five hundred a-year, for he vows that he never beheld one who did, that was not suspicious, or conceited, or purseproud : and let me tell you, Henry is a young man to keep his word where he has made up his mind."

Mr. Williamson well knew that he was so, but as it was not his policy to admit it, he laughed at the idea, and then bade Lord Adair only wait till Henry was in love, and then he would see, that, fortune or no fortune, he would marry. " At all events," he continued, " don't you, my lord, hurry him on to marry a girl without a sixpence, when there are a great many whom he may like, and who are better off."

" Ay ! Williamson," replied the peer, " but, I cannot consider this girl as without a sixpence, when I know all that I do know ; and I am resolved to put it out of anybody's power to ruin me with chancery suits, or kill me by incessant agitation."

" Then I suppose you intend to give the whole India fortune back, when your son marries, as the wedding portion ! " said Williamson with a sneer.

" No, no—not all, not all ! " cried the peer. " I intend of course to give my son sufficient to keep up his rank in society when he is married—and they will have all at my death.—It is not for my own sake, Williamson, that I am saving. I am now verging towards seventy, and it must soon be his ; but we will try him first with a little, that he may know to manage more when he gets it. But, at all

events, I have determined not to risk all I have got by trying to get more, and make him marry heiresses, and all that. No, no ! he shall marry her, if he and she can agree upon it, as certain as I am alive."

Williamson saw that there was no use of farther opposition, and he only remained a few minutes longer with the peer in order to prevent his departure from seeming abrupt and hasty. He did, indeed contemplate for a moment or two the risk of bringing things to an open rupture with Lord Adair, and threatening to divulge all he knew of some important secrets, if the plan of marrying Henry Adair to his fair cousin were pursued. He was naturally bold and harsh, loving collisions and bullyings, and well practised in domineering over all whom fortune cast into his power; but a brief space given to thought showed him that such conduct might only hurry a more disagreeable consummation than that which he anticipated, and induce the peer himself to take the initiative in disclosures which would be as dangerous to Mr. Williamson as any one. He therefore determined to rest upon other plans, though of course his game was complicated and deranged by the moves that had been made without him ; and after having held a rambling and somewhat absent conversation with the peer for five minutes longer, upon other matters of ordinary business, he took his hat and his leave, and walked out of the house. With his thumb-nail pressed against his under-lip, he descended the stone stairs to the dirty little entrance-passage below, and there he gave vent for an instant to the passion which had been agitating him for the last half-hour, by stamping his foot upon the ground, and exclaiming, " This is the devil !"

CHAPTER II.

LADY MARY DENHAM had come to Belgium without the slightest wish or intention of examining, critically or philosophically, morally or politically, the character of the Belgian population. She had no taste for studying all the little peculiarities of national character, or investigating the various manners and customs of other people. She neither wished to improve herself by the adoption of other habits,

or to amuse her friends at home, by depicting the follies and absurdities of those who had shown her hospitality, or treated her, a stranger, with civility and attention in a foreign land. She was quite satisfied that her own manners were those of a lady—that her own country was far more polished and civilized than any other—that tis customs were far more pleasing, and infinitely more decent than were to be found elsewhere—and that the French and the Belgians were very well in their way. The consequence of all this was, that having taken plenty of English servants with her to Brussels, and acquired a few foreign ones to serve as a channel of communication with the people of the country, she retained her own habits, her own hours, and her own whims, with just so much of foreign admixture as would have been troublesome to get rid of in a foreign land. Thus, at six o'clock on the day which followed that whereof we spoke in the last chapter, Lady Mary, Lady Pontypool, and Miss Adair were assembled in the salon of Lady Mary's house ; and as one, two, and three minutes passed, Major Kennedy, Captain Lacy, and General P——, were added to the party.

"I am sorry, dear Helen, that your father cannot be here to-day," said Lady Pontypool ; "I have invited a young friend whom I should like to introduce to him."

"I am afraid, I am the unfortunate cause of Colonel Adair's absence," said General P—— ; "I was obliged to request him to superintend some very important military arrangements, which no one, I was confident, could conduct so well. We were old companions, your father and I, my dear young lady," he added, with a frank nod to Helen, who had been listening with a raised colour to the implied eulogium on her father.

Several fresh visitors were added to the party, and Lacy had taken his seat by Helen's side, to hold with her one of those low and happy conversations, which sometimes chequer the dull pre-dinner half-hour with light, when the servant announced, "Mr. Adair!" and Helen's eyes were instantly raised with a look of surprise.

Young Adair entered with his colour rather raised, for with all his singularities he was not a little sly ; but his extremely handsome person did not appear the worse, nor his dark eyes less bright for the flush upon his cheek ; and the look of almost every one in the room was upon him.

Not so, however, Lacy ; his eyes were bent upon Helen Adair, over whose countenance spread a sudden paleness which surprised and alarmed him ; " Good God, Helen ! what is the matter ?" he asked in a low tone.

" Nothing, nothing !" she answered, " do not ask me now—nothing, Charles, indeed ! I will tell you afterwards ;" and ere she could add more, Lady Pontypool, who had risen to welcome the stranger, and had introduced him to Lady Mary Denham, brought him towards Helen herself. Lacy's surprise was not destined to be diminished by their introduction to each other ; for no sooner did Henry Adair set his eyes upon Helen than he drew a deep breath, as if suddenly struck by some overpowering emotion—coloured over brow and temples like a bashful girl—and then again turned as pale as ashes. Helen, however, had now lost her paleness, and her cheek was glowing with a painful blush ; while Lady Pontypool, who saw nothing of all this, or if she did see it, attributed it to any thing that she pleased except the right cause, introduced the two cousins to each other in a tone of gay good humour. Helen merely bowed her head gently, and he on his part, after having taken a step forward, with a quivering lip, as if about to speak, suddenly seemed overpowered again, drew back, and retreating, to the other side of the room, apparently looked out of the window.

Lacy kept his seat in the mean time beside Helen Adair, and though she was evidently agitated in no slight degree, by a meeting with a young and very handsome man, Charles Lacy was too sure of the candid simplicity of the heart he had won to feel the least touch of jealousy, or to suspect even for a moment that that heart might ever have felt for another those sensations which he proudly believed he had awakened for the first time. He saw that she was still agitated and uneasy even after her cousin was gone ; and feeling with the nice tact of gentlemanly mind, that the knowledge of having shown embarrassment before him, without an opportunity of explaining it, might prolong the very embarrassment she suffered, he went on to speak as if nothing had happened, saying, " Your young cousin did not see me, or has forgotten me."

" Then you have seen him before, too !" cried Helen, surprised.

" Oh yes, often," replied Lacy ; " I saw him frequently

in Paris last year. He is a very excellent as well as a ~~very~~ talented man, I hear."

"Indeed," said Helen; "but surely he is very eccentric, is he not?"

"Yes! oh yes," replied Lacy, decidedly, "he bears that character generally; but I have heard and believe that his eccentricities always take amiable forms, though they go into excesses. His singularities are all the fruits of wild and unrestrained enthusiasm."

Helen looked up in his face with a smile that meant many things; "Well," she said at length, "I suppose his eccentricities must be amiable, for I am sure I owe them much."

"Indeed!" said Lacy; "then there is a mystery, Helen; you will make me curious in despite of myself—curious to know how either he or his eccentricities can have conferred any benefit on you."

Helen looked down, and the colour ran quickly over her cheek again, but it was only from a momentary timidity; for the next instant she raised her eyes once more—her beautiful hazel eyes, with that never-to-be-mistaken tender light of love beaming out from them, and she answered, "If it had not been for of his one eccentricities I should have never known you, Charles."

Dinner was announced, and the half-uttered exclamation stood upon Lacy's lips. His attachment to Helen Adair, however, had by this time become apparent to all persons who beheld them much together, except two—Lady Pontypool and Colonel Adair. The first was blind to it from a peculiar conformation of the moral eye, which impeded her seeing any thing in the same manner that other people saw it; and the second was blind from that inevitable necessity which prevents all fathers from perceiving when their children are fallen in love; but he had some excuse, for he had been able to see but very little of his daughter since she came to Brussels. However, Lacy's attachment was so well known, and had gradually become so openly displayed, that he did not think it at all necessary to give up his seat beside Helen to any one; and consequently, in the arrangements of the dinner-table, he found himself seated beside her. Henry Adair was on the other side a little farther up, and the moment his eyes rested upon Lacy, the light of recognition—ay, and of pleased recognition too—beamed up in them with a bright and cheerful smile. It

seemed as if there were something in the sight of Charles Lacy which put him at his ease, removing that painful embarrassment under which he had evidently continued to labour till he took his seat at the dinner-table. Lacy had been looking another way, but the moment he turned his eyes Henry Adair bowed, and the other replied with a smile, "I thought you had forgotten me, Adair."

"Oh, no!" answered the other, "that I could never do, Captain Lacy, since the pleasure of seeing you every now and then was the only thing that made Paris tolerable to me last winter."

"It is certainly a place I very much dislike," replied Lacy.

"Then in the name of heaven why did you stay in it?" demanded the other; "you had nothing to keep you there —you were as free to come and go as the quick-winged swallow or the unconstrained wind; while on the contrary, I was tied to that great, dull capital with its nucleus of palaces and its oceans of lanes and dirty alleys, its memories of slaughter and its atmosphere of vice, by the presence of my father, who, as you know, would be lonely enough if I left him long or often."

By the time he had concluded, Henry Adair had contrived to draw the eyes of most of those who were strangers to him upon himself; but the presence of Lacy had now so far relieved him, that though he sunk back into himself whenever he found that he was verging into declamation, yet he soon recovered, and carried on the conversation with a good deal of spirit with different people around him. Few, indeed, seemed very capable of competing with him in either powers of language or force of thought, except Lacy, who did not strive to do so on any occasion, except when the other, as was not unfrequently the case, ventured something unreasonable and wild; and then Lacy certainly did reply, mingling a sufficient degree of the poetical enthusiasm, which though ruled and restrained, existed not the less strongly in his heart, with that calmer good sense which overthrew all that was unreal in a moment, however potently entrenched in words. Henry Adair seldom attempted, indeed, to oppose his reasoning, seeming to feel at once Lacy's mind was superior to his own, and to regard him with something like reverence. To Helen he spoke more than once, and was often led on in that track by good Lady Pontypool; but

Helen replied no more than was absolutely necessary to prevent her conduct from appearing peculiar. It was not in her nature to be chilling in her manners to any one ; but Lacy had quite sufficient cause to feel that her demeanour to no one was the same that it was towards himself.

Thus passed the dinner, and after it was over, the gentlemen soon rejoined the ladies in the saloon. It cannot be denied that Lacy was anxious to gain from Helen some explanation of what he had remarked before dinner ; to learn where and how she had first met her cousin, and what influence he could have exerted on her acquaintance with himself. It is impossible to love, as Lacy loved Helen Adair, without feeling a keen and personal interest in every thing which can produce emotions great enough in the heart of the beloved to give rise either to a smile, or a tear, or a blush. It was one of those evenings, however, which are destined for the purpose of preventing any one from having any private conversation with another. Various people dropped in, causing moving of chairs, and discomposing arrangements ; and at the only moment when Lacy saw an opportunity of obtaining the explanation he wished, a general officer who had just entered called him into the other room, and kept him in a long and interesting conversation, concerning the events which were now rapidly approaching. It was the fourteenth day of June, and his friend informed him, that tidings had reached Brussels that night of the French having driven the Prussian outposts across the Sambre. There was even a report, he said, that they had entered Charleroi ; but this was disbelieved ; and it was generally supposed that the demonstrations on that side were only intended to mask Napoleon's real intention of advancing upon Brussels by the other road. This was the cause why the Duke of Wellington remained still unmoved, watching for any events which might betray the true plan of the enemy. "But at all events," the general went on, "it was clear, that ere long some far more active measures would be taken."

The matter was too interesting to be spoken of lightly, so that the conversation lasted for several minutes ; and when he returned, Lacy found that Henry Adair occupied the seat by Helen's side. Lacy could still afford to let him do so without feeling jealous ; but some other person interposed to relieve Helen, by asking her to sing. She complied at

once, and Lacy gained one side of the piano, while Henry Adair hung over her on the other. He was, it seems, passionately fond of music, and it produced upon him impressions which could not be controlled, deepening in his bosom all those powerful feelings and wild enthusiasms, which were, under even ordinary circumstances, but too strong. Helen sang sweetly and skilfully, though with no very great execution; but her voice was peculiarly soft and musical, and as he stood beside her, and hung over her, he lost himself in the sounds—his eyes sparkled, his features became more and more animated; and when she ended, his language was all poetry, and admiration, and enthusiasm.

There is no denying that Lacy was a little annoyed; but not half so much as Helen herself, who might have found some difficulty in extricating herself from an unpleasant situation, had not Mary Denham, whose wise kindness was never long in discovering when any thing disturbed her friends, come forward, and called Henry Adair away upon some ready excuse. The evening, however, was soon over. There was more music, and more conversation; but Henry Adair, could hear no music that he thought like that of his cousin, and Lacy could not obtain the conversation that he wished for. At length the rooms began to grow thin; and Lacy, whose hours of pleasure were stolen from graver things, was forced to take his leave.

"When shall we see you to-morrow, Charles?" asked Lady Mary in a low tone, as he wished her good night.

"I am afraid it will be late," he answered, "for I have a good deal of duty to do; but I will dine with you if you dine alone, and will come a little before." She nodded, and he left her; while Henry Adair, who had preceded him in his departure, walked home, full of many musings. His father had already retired to rest, and proceeding to his own chamber, he sent his servant away, and sat down to think; but thought was all in confusion; love had set his seal upon the power of thinking, and all that meditation produced was the consciousness that he did love. Wisely and carefully his father had abstained from endeavouring to point his affections towards Helen; for he knew his son well enough to be aware that all his acts must spring from the feelings of his own heart, and that the least attempt to bias him would but make him fly off, like a tennis-ball at the rebound, in quite a different direction. He had, therefore,

merely told his son that he would meet his cousin, Miss Adair, at Lady Mary Denham's, informing him at the same time, that the will under which he inherited his property prevented him from meeting, willingly, Colonel Adair or any of his family.

"I would have thrown such a will in the fire!" thought his son; but the tenderness he felt for his father kept him silent, and he proceeded to ask who Lady Mary Denham was. His father had replied briefly; and informed him at the same time, that she was engaged to her cousin, Captain Lacy, whom he already knew. Henry Adair had thought no more about the matter at the time; but now he thought of it deeply. "Engaged to Lady Mary Denham!" he said, as he turned in his mind the conduct of Lacy towards his cousin—"engaged to Lady Mary Denham! and yet all his attention seemed to be taken up with that enchanting girl! To think of her being my cousin too! that very cousin in whom I have felt such an interest! I dare say she must be like her mother, for I can well believe that her father—that any man, would sacrifice fortune, ay, a world himself, for such a being as that. But if Lacy loves her—then I am miserable indeed, for who would prefer me to him? Yet perhaps, after all, it may be that he, engaged to his cousin, and feeling as if he were in fact already married, pays attention to her fair guest. But I will bring my doubts to an end at once—I will go to-morrow and ascertain whether I am to be wretched or happy through life!"

With such thoughts he went to bed, but certainly did not not sleep, for his was one of those temperaments in which sleep like a timid bird is scared away by the least stir of any of the things around it. Early the next morning he was up, and was down in the saloon long before his father appeared. When the Peer came at length, and breakfast was served, Henry fixed his large dark eyes upon him, with that sort of tender and thoughtful interest with which he generally looked upon his father, fearing that in the present instance what he had determined to say and do might give his father pain.

"Do you know sir," he said at length, "that I have fallen in love?"

"Well, my dear boy," answered Lord Adair calmly, "that is no very unnatural thing!"

"Well then, sir," he added, "as a consequence, I am

now as anxious to marry as I used formerly to be averse to it."

"That is very natural too, my dear Henry," replied his father; "and if the marriage be such as I can approve of, you may depend upon my doing all I can to make you happy."

"But that is the question," answered Henry Adair, "whether you will approve or not. In the first place, I can expect no fortune with the wife I propose to marry."

"Humph!" said Lord Adair, unable, notwithstanding every counterbalancing consideration, to get quite rid of his dislike to the want of wealth; "that is bad Henry: but let me hear more; who is the lady?"

"It is no other, sir, than the daughter of your cousin, Colonel Adair," replied his son; "and as it is in consequence of our having an inordinate fortune that she has none, I think that you cannot object to a want on her part, by which we benefit, and which we have quite sufficient to supply."

"But have you any chance of winning her?" demanded his father, whose mind was relieved by this avowal of the person, as he had not expected so sudden an impression; "you have only seen her once—I think."

"I have seen her often, sir," replied his son. "When I was down in —— shire last year I saw her more than once. I loved her then—I love her now; and as to winning her, what I now seek is your consent to try."

"Well, Henry," replied his father, "you have my consent; for I have often, very often indeed, wished—that is to say thought—that if I could make Colonel Adair some compensation for the loss of his fortune, I should be very glad indeed."

Henry Adair thanked his father again and again, not only for his acquiescence, which was much more ready than he had expected, but for the feelings—which he thought generous—whereon that ready acquiescence was based.—Nothing more than his father's consent seemed necessary at the time to Henry Adair, for all considerations of the fortune that was to be given to enable him to marry, were dust in the balance compared with the eagerness of other feelings. He was one of those few men,—who could calmly look upon love in a cottage as offering a prospect of true happiness. Nay, he was one of the few men who could have realized

that bright day-dream of early youth, who would never have felt the thorns in the wild rose, who would have discovered the honey in the lowliest flower. For the sake of his father, he had trained himself to bear many privations to which rank and fortune would have subjected him—for the sake of not crossing even the base passion of his parent, he had foreborne luxurious enjoyments, conveniences to which he had every right—what would he have done then for the sake of Helen Adair, and the passion that she inspired ?

Almost as soon as breakfast was over, he took his hat, and walked towards the house of Lady Mary Denham ; for, as we have before said, he little minded forms or ceremonies, or conventional hours, when he had any great object in view. He went along, too, with the bounding step of joy ; for his heart was one easily raised by favourable auguries, and his unexpected success with his father led him to expect the same in his farther progress. As he approached the house, however, the barometer of hope began to fall ; and it was sadly depressed when he came near, and saw a splendid carriage at the door with servants clothed in the livery of the family. “ They are going out ! ” he thought, “ and in common courtesy I cannot detain them ; I will pass on, and wait till they return.”

He did pass on, and the servant who remembered his face touched his hat ; but at the end of the street the carriage overtook him, and rolled past. He looked in, but it only contained Lady Mary Denham and Lady Pontypool, and they were too busy in their own conversation to remark him. With a beating heart, Henry Adair turned back, rang the bell of Lady Mary’s house, and asked at once for Miss Adair. She was at home, the servant said, and preceded him up the staircase ; but he followed with a rapid foot, and scarcely was his name announced when he was in the saloon.

Helen, who had been writing, had laid down her pen, and was very pale ; but she of course treated her unexpected visitor with politeness, and said that she was sorry both Lady Mary and Lady Pontypool were out. She might hope, perhaps, that it would be a hint to her cousin to shorten his visit ; for she felt that there was an unpleasant explanation impending which she would have given worlds to avoid,

Henry Adair, however, replied at once, "I am glad of it; for my visit was not to them, but to you. We are cousins, Miss Adair, and I am sure it is not in your nature to be harsh or unkind." The paleness, and anxiety of Helen's look did not escape him, and his heart beat more quickly, but not more joyously—he regretted that he had been so hasty—he was sorry that he had not waited—but still he went on. "I come to you to-day," he said, "to apologize for conduct some months ago, and to assure you that it was not at all of the kind—of the nature which I am afraid it must have appeared." Helen's countenance cleared up, and though she blushed a good deal, yet she smiled too, and it gave him fresh courage in a moment. "Indeed," he continued, "I have reproached myself for it ever since; but you must make some excuse for me, Miss Adair, when you remember that I have not been brought up as other young men have, that I have mingled but little with persons of my age and station, that I have lived in fanciful visions, and have, I am afraid, hitherto subjected my manners and my conduct but too little to the dictation of society. I trust, therefore, that you will give me your pardon."

"Oh! certainly, certainly," replied Helen, greatly relieved; "think no more of it, Mr. Adair, as I am sure I shall not. Such things are best forgotten as soon as possible."

"Forget it, I can never," he replied, drawing encouragement from the change of Helen's countenance, which would have afforded anything but hope if he could have perceived in what feelings that change arose—"forget it, I can never: but I am only anxious that you should understand and forgive conduct which, perhaps, in any one less odd and more acquainted with the world than I am, might have been insulting; but which, believe me, originated in any thing but an intention to offend, or even in a misconception of your station or character; what in another might have been produced by impudence or vice, was solely occasioned in my conduct by an unfortunate habit of forgetting rules and proprieties whenever my feelings are strongly affected. I saw you—I admired you—I felt that for the first time I had beheld a woman that I could love, and I should have judged it very hard that, because I had no formal introduction, I should lose the only opportunities I might ever have of gaining that which would make me happy for life. But do not

suppose," he continued, seeing her again turn very pale—"but do not suppose that I did not strive to obtain that introduction ; I described your appearance and dress minutely to Mr. Williamson, an old schoolfellow, at whose house I was at the time. But he mistook, and told me another name, and introduced me to another person ; she was, I dare say, very lovely ; but, oh ! she was, to me at least, all unlike you !—And now," he added, fixing his large fine eyes full upon her countenance, and reading but too well the expression that it had now assumed—"and now that I have obtained such an introduction as I could have desired, I am afraid I am too late—that the cup of happiness has been snatched from my lip—that your heart is no longer to be given !"

He paused, and Helen lifted her eyes with a look of painful, anxious hesitation ; for he evidently expected a reply, and she knew not what to say. "Indeed, Mr. Adair," she at length said, "indeed, I hope that this has not gone so far as in any degree seriously to affect your happiness. I will not," she added, seeing him shake his head with a bitter smile, "I will not pretend to look upon your feelings as I might those of most other people, in such circumstances—I will not affect to look upon your regard as a youthful fancy that will soon pass away—but still I must hope, as you have only known me a very, very short time, and never were actually in society with me till last night, that your feelings will yield to reason. You can tell nothing of my disposition, little even of my manners, feelings, or thoughts—you cannot, indeed, have any certainty that you could either esteem or like me if you knew me better, and under such circumstances ——"

"Do you think, Miss Adair," he asked, interrupting her as she paused with some hesitation in regard to the conclusion of her sentence, "do you think that the face—that the glorious countenance, the book of feelings, the page of the soul—can give no insight into the heart—that it cannot, that it does not declare, in language a thousand times more sincere than that of the tongue, the deep secrets of the human heart ? Oh ! yes, indeed it does ; and were your own lips to calumniate your own character, I should find in that countenance, in those eyes, proof superabundant to confute the tale ; and, as I did from the first, I should believe you still all that is good, and kind, and noble, and excellent.

But it is in vain, Miss Adair—you love me not—you cannot love me.”—Helen was silent, and he proceeded : “ And yet, say something to me ! Let me hear my fate from your own lips—tell me yourself to be unhappy !”

“ Oh, Mr. Adair !” she replied, “ you put me to a hard necessity. I would fain tell you to be happy—I would fain say how sorry I am that I cannot in any degree contribute to your happiness—I would fain point out to you that, if you chose to exert yourself, you will soon forget one who is unable to return your love—whom you have known so short a time, and of whom you really know so little.”

“ Oh no, Miss Adair,” he said, “ I must not so flatter myself. I shall never forget you. Your image will be as deeply impressed upon my heart at the day of my death, as it is even now—but still your happiness shall be my first wish—my fondest prayer. I know, I see it all—you love another !” Helen was silent.—“ And if you love Charles Lacy,” he continued, “ you love one worthy of you—a noble, feeling, generous, upright man—a man bearing about a feeling heart in a world where such are few. But with regard to him I have been deceived, or last night would have saved both you and me the pain of this morning. I was told that he was about to marry his cousin, Lady Mary Denham, and I was told so on authority which I could not doubt.”

“ Indeed !” cried Helen, not a little surprised, and thrown off her guard by astonishment ; “ indeed !—who could be the person to tell you such a thing ?”

“ It was my own father,” replied Henry Adair, “ but authorized to say so by Lady Pontypool.”

“ How very unfortunate !” exclaimed Helen ; but then remembering that she was betraying not only the secrets of her own bosom, but those of Lacy also : she paused abruptly, and blushed deeply again.

“ Miss Adair !” continued her cousin, rising, “ I have certainly no right to pry into the secrets of your bosom ; but it is vain to attempt to hide from me where your affections are engaged. Had I not been blinded before I came here by false information, I should not have remained in doubt a moment. But fear not that I will make any wrong use of my discovery ; fear not that passion, or disappointment, or mortified pride will ever induce me to suffer a word that you could not wish to pass my lips. On the contrary,

if any sacrifice, if any effort of mine could make you happier, no sacrifice, no effort would be spared by me. That I can never cease to love you ardently, passionately, I regret, because I could wish to teach you to regard me as a brother; but, at all events, should you ever need my assistance in any thing—and our situation as relations renders such a thing possible—you will find that I will act like a brother. And now farewell! for my longer stay would only add to my sorrow, and give pain to you." He held out his hand to her as he spoke.

Helen could not refuse him hers, and taking it tenderly and respectfully, he raised it to his lips, dropped it, and without another word turned and quitted the saloon.

He had retained his composure through the whole of a scene the most painful, to a heart like his, that can be described; but that composure was lost when he had quitted the presence of Helen Adair. Bitter, bitter disappointment preyed upon his heart; and hurrying along like a madman, he passed through the streets which were now becoming crowded, pushing from his path all that obstructed his way. Many were the curses and imprecations that he called upon his head as he went; but he heeded them and heard them not, and in a very few minutes was at the door of the apartments which his father tenanted. As soon as the door was open, he was passing on to his own room, but his father met him in the vestibule, asking, "Well, Henry, how have you sped?" Henry Adair replied not at the moment, but walked on into the saloon, and there casting himself upon a chair, fixed his eyes upon his father who stood opposite to him, perceiving from his whole appearance that his son was dreadfully agitated.

"I have suffered a deep and bitter disappointment," the young man said at length; "she loves another!"

"Well, well, Henry," said his father, in a tone of consolation, his first feelings being excited for his son, before he thought of what might be the consequences to himself—"well, well, Henry, do not suffer yourself to be so shaken, my dear boy—these feelings will pass away; there are other women in the world as beautiful as she is—be comforted."

"If you had suddenly lost every thing you have, and of all your wealth had but a guinea, would you be comforted?" demanded his son, rising; and without other reply he left

the room, and proceeded to his own apartments. There he remained during the whole day, but towards night he came down again. By this time his agitation had ceased: he was calm and collected, but a deep melancholy had taken possession of him, and though his manner to his father exhibited increased tenderness, yet he spoke no more of his own disappointment.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE events, that she would have given worlds to have prevented, were thus passing in the house of Lady Mary Denham, she herself, having entered her carriage with Lady Pontypool, was rolling along through the streets of Brussels upon some ordinary expedition—I forget what. The moment she was in her carriage, however, my Aunt Pontypool began: “Oh ! my dear Mary, I am so glad to have a few minutes alone with you. Do you know, I have fallen upon the very best scheme in the world for Helen Adair !”

“ The Lord deliver her therefrom !” thought Lady Mary, who was but too well aware of the obliquity of Lady Pontypool’s aim in general, when she strove hard to hit a particular mark. She restrained, however from any thing sharp, and only asked, “ Well, my dear aunt, and what is your scheme ?”

Thus encouraged, Lady Pontypool proceeded, and while Lady Mary’s cheek went on from one stage of crimson to another, and her ears tingled as if some one had boxed them, all out of shame and mortification for her aunt and Helen Adair, my admirable Aunt Pontypool went in triumph through the recapitulation of all her achievements, and ended by saying, that from what she had seen last night, she had no doubt that young Adair would be there in the course of the day, to make his proposal in form.

“ God forbid !” cried Lady Mary ; “ why, my dear Aunt Pontypool, do you know what you have done ? Why, Helen Adair is engaged to Charles Lacy—I find you must be told, lest you should make matters worse ; but indeed, indeed, my dear aunt, you should not enter upon any of these plans without consulting the people principally con-

cerned ; and do remember, that in regard to what I have said about Charles and Helen, you must on no account mention it to any one."

Lady Pontypool had fallen back in the carriage, in consternation and astonishment, at the breaking-down of this new scheme, on which—after the failure of a thousand others that she had seen ruined in the course of her life—she had fixed her hopes with the fullest confidence. All she ventured to utter, however, was, " Why, my dear Mary, I thought you were going to marry Charles Lacy yourself ! "

" Why, I can only say, my dear aunt," replied Lady Mary, " that I have told you a thousand times that I had no intention of doing any such thing."

" Oh ! but I thought that was only joking, Mary," she answered, still thinking that any body else was wrong but herself, though she felt a little shame and a little sorrow it is true ; but not enough of either to prevent her doing the same thing the very next minute, if occasion presented ;— " you always speak in such a gay and joking way, Mary, that I am never sure whether you are in jest or in earnest. At all events, my dear niece, my intentions at least were good ; I had no other wish than Helen's benefit, poor dear girl ! The matter is not so very bad, after all."

" Well, well, my dear aunt," answered Lady Mary, " it is done, and so it cannot be helped now ; but I must get as fast as I can to consult with Helen, and see what can be devised to remedy all this : but in the mean time, for heaven's sake do promise me not to do any thing farther in the business yourself, and not even to mention a word of it, or of the engagement between Charles and Helen, to any one."

Lady Pontypool very willingly promised, having in her own mind always ready a store of perfectly innocent mental reservations, which rendered such promises on her part of very little avail. For instance, in the present case she would not at all have scrupled to talk over the whole affair, in all its particulars, with either Lord Methwyn or Colonel Adair, contriving generally to think—" Oh, *they* must know it—there can be no harm in speaking of it *to them*," in regard to the very people, in whose favour an exception was least to be made.

As soon as she possibly could, Lady Mary returned home ; but, as we have already seen, her arrival did not

take place till the visit of Henry Adair was over, so that all Lady Mary could do was to explain to Helen how the whole business had occurred. Helen was agitated and out of spirits, for, to a woman of any feeling, the duty which she had just executed must always be a most painful one; but at the same time, though she certainly did wish that Lady Pontypool had not brought such a task on her head, she felt all the kindness of the good lady's intentions, and was grateful even for the endeavours which had ended in discomfort. But Helen was at the moment still farther embarrassed by a case of conscience, in which her feelings and her understanding exercised much casuistry. It was, whether she should or should not tell Lacy what had occurred. Delicacy of feeling towards Henry Adair said, "No—keep the secret of his unfortunate love to your own bosom, or at least tell it not to his happier rival." But then the rule that she had laid down for herself from the first, of having no concealments from the man to whom she had given her heart and promised her hand, bade her tell him the whole, especially as it was a point which, concerning her affections, touched him also.

She remembered too, that she had promised him an explanation of her agitation on the preceding night, and that the one subject would lead directly to the other; but still she had hardly made up her mind to do so, when Mary Denham returned; and after listening to the history of my Aunt Pontypool's campaign, Helen told her difficulty, and asked her fair cousin's advice.

"Oh, tell him all, Helen," answered Lady Mary, "it is always the best plan. A woman should never let the man she loves have any thing to find out, except how much she loves him. Take my advice—tell him all! You risk nothing, for, according to your account, Mr. Adair has acted perfectly like a gentleman and a man of good feeling; and I know Lacy well enough to be sure that he will be sorry for him. 'Tell him, Helen! tell him!'"

Such advice confirmed her own half-determined purpose, and Helen waited anxiously for the hour that was to bring her lover. Lacy appeared considerably before the usual dinner time, and Lady Mary resolving that he should have full opportunity of hearing all that Helen had to tell, not only quitted the drawing-room herself, but sent for Lady Pontypool, who had remained working the most tiresome

purse that ever flowed from silk and knitting-needles. Although Helen Adair had before this time found herself alone with Charles Lacy, and had heard all from his lips that love and tenderness could bring within the magic circle of a few short minutes, yet still she never was so left without feeling that trembling thrill of deep emotion, which nothing but love can give. On the present occasion it was stronger than ever, and she was pale too from the agitation of the morning, so that Lacy had a good opportunity of introducing the subject on which he certainly was curious.

"You are pale, my beloved Helen," he said ; "I am afraid that the agitation which you suffered last night was too serious to be easily forgotten."

"Oh no, Charles," she answered. "But I have been agitated this morning also, and as I have determined always to tell you every thing, I may as well begin my story at once."

"Thank you, thank you, for that determination, dear girl," replied Lacy ; "depend upon it, it will make us but the happier. You said, however, that if it had not been for your cousin Henry Adair, you would never have known me. First let me hear how that can be, my Helen, for I puzzled myself with it all last night."

"Why, it happened thus," answered Helen ; "you know our little village church at home—at least what used to be my home—now I have none."

"I hope ere long that we shall have but one," answered Lacy. "But go on, dear girl ; I know the church well—what happened there, Helen?"

"Why there I first saw my poor cousin Henry Adair," answered Helen ; "I did not know him or any thing about him, it is true ; but I saw a stranger, evidently a gentleman, staring at me through the whole of the service in a way that embarrassed and displeased me ; and the next Sunday the same was repeated. Two days afterwards, as I was walking alone through the fields between our own house and the Rectory, I saw the same person ; but as every body there is accustomed to walk alone, I had no fear, and turning my eyes another way I passed him as fast as I could. Twice the next day he passed by the house ; and the very next time I was out alone, I again met him in the fields, just as I was coming to a gate. He opened the gate for me to pass, and as I did so spoke to me."

Lacy turned very red, and there was a certain quivering of the upper-lip, and expansion of the nostrils, which might have augured ill towards Henry Adair ; but Helen went on —“ Nay, do not look so angry, Charles. Do you know you men often frighten women into concealments ? It was so with my father, Charles, in this very instance. I knew that he was hasty, and that where he thought his daughter insulted, he would listen to no reason ; so, after deliberating long, I could not make up my mind to tell him.”

“ He is very singular, and eccentric—your cousin, I mean,” replied Lacy ; “ and I know, Helen, that what would be exceedingly insolent and ungentlemanly in other men, would assume another appearance in him ; but in this instance he was very wrong ; what did he say to you when he spoke as you describe ?”

“ I really hardly know,” answered Helen ; “ he began with excuses for his conduct, I believe ; but I was so astonished, and got away so quickly, that I hardly know what he said, or what I replied ; but I am afraid that my answer was very angry.”

“ Well did he deserve it !” answered Lacy, “ but did you ever see him afterwards ?”

“ Never till last night,” replied Helen. “ My father at that time was just upon the eve of setting off for London, to inquire into that sad business of his agent’s failure. I was afraid, as I have said, to tell him what had occurred, for I knew he would instantly seek out and punish the offender ; but, at the same time, I did not like the idea of remaining totally alone in our own house, and having to go every where without a companion till he returned ; and, therefore, I went over to our excellent M^s. Bellingham, and telling her all, I plainly invited myself to pass the period of my father’s absence at the Rectory. I knew they would receive me gladly ; and shortly after I went there, you came down to the Hall.”

“ Your conduct is always wise and excellent, dearest Helen,” replied Lacy ; “ and as to this error of your cousin, I suppose we must pass it over in favour of his eccentricities. I do not wonder at your surprise on seeing him last night ; but you say that you have been again agitated this morning, and I should suppose that you had been giving your father a complete explanation of our engagement, if I

did not know that he went yesterday to Nivelles with the division of the Prince of Orange."

"Oh no," replied Helen, the colour coming up into her temples as she prepared for the remaining part of the task she had imposed upon herself—"oh, no ! it was my cousin again who agitated me."

Lacy's brow grew very dark, but Helen went on to expain, and without dwelling on all the small particulars of her relation's conduct, merely told that he had that morning come to offer her his hand in a formal manner, and seemed so pained and hurt by his disappointment, that he had made her sincerely sorry for him.

"I will not be jealous, Helen," replied Lacy, "though pity be akin to love ; but I need not ask if my dear Helen gave him so decided an answer as to preclude his entertaining hopes that I trust will be vain."

"Most certainly I did," replied Helen ; "but he himself rapidly came to the same conclusion. Indeed, Charles, he very soon comprehended that my heart was not my own to give, ' she added with a brightening smile, for her feelings had hitherto been somewhat sad upon the whole business ; " and he at once fixed upon you as its possessor. He spoke of you, Charles, as I love to hear ; and he said, with much real consideration for me in the midst of his own distress, that after what he had seen last night, he would not have given me the pain of such a declaration as he had just made, if he had not been misled by good Lady Pontypool having told his father that you were engaged to Mary."

"Oh, my Aunt Pontypool ! my Aunt Pontypool !" cried Lacy, "what mischief thou dost make, with the very best intentions in the world !"

There was still many a question to be asked and to be answered ; and in the short half-hour that remained before they were interrupted, how many minutes of pure unmingled happiness did they obtain in each other's society ! Nectar ! nectar, the drink of gods themselves, must be Time sweetened by Love ! But how soon it is drank ! how fast, how unreturning it pours over our lips ! It leaves behind, it is true, a flavour and a perfume that nothing can ever take away ; the coarse viands of the world, through long, long years, all partake of it, and are purified, and rendered sweeter by that which went before. It is like the miraculous berry of the African coast, which, once tasted, imparts

its sweetness to every after-food." Love! who is there that is not better, nobler, gentler for having known love? Love!—oh! excellent, wonderful, admirable love!

They were moments that Helen Adair never forgot through life; you might have plucked out her heart before that memory would have left it; and with Charles Lacy, the effect was perhaps more, because the softening and subduing power to which he was then forced to bend, was less consimilair with his nature than it ever is with that of a woman. But these moments came to an end, and very, very pleasant ones succeeded, but not so sweet. Dinner was scarcely over, when a step sounded near the dining-hall of some one approaching with familiar intimacy; and in a moment after, Lady Mary Denham's cheek would easily have told, to those who knew the secrets of her heart, that the coming visitor was Major Kennedy.

"I have intruded upon you," he said, "at an untimely hour." But Mary only replied by a smile mingled with a slight look of reproach, which he wisely did not apply to his untimely visit, but to his supposing it unwelcome.

"The truth is, I am afraid, that I shall not be able to go to the Duchess's ball to-night," he continued; "and I did not choose to lose altogether the pleasure I had promised myself."

"But how happens it," demanded Lady Mary, who observed a thoughtful kind of gloom hanging upon Kennedy's brow, "how happens it, recreant knight, that you abandon those you had promised to protect? I hope you have taken care to provide me with another partner for *number one*.—But seriously, Major Kennedy, what is the cause—for I see that there is some cause—for your unexpected absence?"

"Merely this, my dear Lady Mary," replied Kennedy. "Rumours are flying very thick in the town regarding the French operations, and I received a letter from Namur this afternoon, brought by an especial courier, who found it scarcely possible to pass, showing that the French are advancing in force on the side of Frasne; we, therefore, cannot be long without a collision. What the Duke intends to do, I cannot of course tell; but I have no doubt that he will wait till the very last moment ere he determines on any point of opposition, in order to be certain of his enemy's views; but when he does strike, it will not be without effect, depend upon it; and I am anxious to be perfectly

ready when the moment comes. I have much to do—and suppose we were ordered to march to-night!"

"But, good God! is such a thing possible?" cried Lady Mary, rising and turning very pale; "let us go to the drawing-room. You alarm me, Major Kennedy."

"I am sorry to do so, Lady Mary," he replied, "but still the truth must be told. I have no doubt, indeed, that whatever the Duke determines on," he added, in a more cheerful tone, "will be for the glory of our country and ourselves. But still, Mary," he said, in a lower voice, as he perceived that they had become a little separated from the rest of the party in their progress towards the saloon; "still we are evidently on the eve of active measures. I might be ordered to march at a moment's notice, and not have an opportunity of bidding you farewell. If, without impropriety, you could grant it to me, dear Mary, I would beg that our parting should be alone. Can you give me five minutes, do you think, in the course of the evening?"

"Certainly!" replied Lady Mary Denham; "I am sure I do not know why I wished all this kept private till the time for our marriage came near. It was, I believe, to avoid the teasing of the world, and the complimenting, and wondering, and all that, till it was inevitable; but I am neither afraid nor ashamed of my choice, Kennedy, and I do not see why the whole should not be spoken of now as well as hereafter. Let me know then when the last minute you can spare comes near, and you shall not find me unwilling to avow our engagement at once."

When they reached the drawing-room the conversation again became general, and approaching events were canvassed more particularly; but at length the clock upon the mantle-piece pointed to eight, and Kennedy directed Lady Mary's eyes to the hand of the dial. Oh! how precious do moments sometimes become! Mary Denham rose, and to the astonishment of my Aunt Pontypool, she said, "Major Kennedy, before you go, I desire five minutes' conversation with you. Will you come with me into the next room? See if there be lights there."

There were lights, and Kennedy led her into the adjoining saloon, closing the door. Mary Denham left her hand in his, and gazing anxiously in his face, while her heart sunk at the thought that she might never behold those features again, she said, "Oh, Kennedy, is it possible that

you are likely to leave me so soon? I did not think I should have felt this so much!"

"Indeed, dear Mary," he replied, "you cannot feel it more than I do. I have often gone to battle before, and encountered the enemy without a thought; but then, Mary, I could but lose life—and now, with life I lose Mary Denham. Oh! dear girl, what a change you have brought over all my feelings! But I must not speak longer on such things, dear Mary, or I shall grow a woman. The object of my seeking this interview was neither to pain you, Mary, nor to make you at all avow our engagement farther than you may think necessary. It was, dear, excellent girl, to express, perhaps for the last time, how deeply, how sincerely, how tenderly I love you—to thank you for a preference which I feel to have been unmerited by me, and which was contrary to all the ordinary maxims of the world—to assure you that this heart, which never can be grateful enough for your generous affection, will only cease to beat for you when it ceases to beat for ever—and to hold you for the first time to this bosom, while we mutually pray that it may not be for the last!"

As he spoke, he clasped her gently in his arms, and pressed one fond kiss upon the lips of her he loved. Mary drooped her head, and wept; and for some moments neither of them spoke, but their hearts were raised in prayer to the Lord God of all things. At length she exclaimed suddenly, "The picture, Kennedy!—you promised me your picture!"

"It is here," he replied, producing it.

Mary turned to the light, and wiping the tears away that dimmed her eyes, she gazed on it for several minutes.—"Yes, it is like! very like!" she said; "I am afraid mine is less so, for the man wanted to flatter me—but at all events, here it is, Kennedy;" and opening a drawer in a writing-desk, she took out a small red case, and from that a picture set in gold. "There, Kennedy," she said, "you will not forget me. But you are going to battle," she added, laying her two hands on his, and gazing up into his eyes—"You are going to battle, and it is but fit that I should think of all that may happen. I have already thought of it, Kennedy, and it may not be disagreeable to you to hear, that if you fall I shall look upon myself as your widow.—It has always been my opinion also that widows should

never marry again—you understand me! Nay, do not shake your head!—You do not yet know Marry Denham fully. I promise voluntarily and most solemnly never to give my hand to another. And now Kennedy," she added in a firmer tone, "now we have looked upon the darker side, of things, let us turn the page. I say to you, Go, my hero—go! conquer! live! and come back to claim a hand that will be given to you most willingly!"

Kennedy caught her again to his heart, and then tore himself away. Mary Denham remained for a few minutes alone, ere she returned to the saloon, where the evidences of tears were still very plainly read upon her face. "Dear Helen," she said, "it is time for you to dress for the Duchess's ball; but my Aunt Pontypool will be your chaperon, for I am not in spirits to go; and Lacy will meet you there, you know, and I dare say has already engaged you to dance with him.—Have you not, Charles?"

Lacy smiled; and Helen would fain have gained permission to stay at home too, but Lady Mary would not consent; and Lady Pontypool, who cared nothing about the ball herself, would insist upon Helen going, feeling perfectly sure that she (Lady Pontypool) knew what would give pleasure to Helen Adair much better than Helen Adair did herself. Towards ten o'clock, then, Lady Pontypool and Helen set out for a ball, which none of those who were at it will ever forget. Lacy was there before them; and Helen, whose beauty certainly outshone all that surrounded her, though there were there many of the loveliest of our own land of loveliness, had danced twice with him, when one of the servants of the house who was acquainted with Lacy's person, came up, and asked in a low tone if he could tell him which was Miss Adair. Lacy complied, and the servant informed her that Lady Mary Denham was unwell, and had sent the carriage for her, begging she would come back.

Helen looked for Lady Pontypool, but the worthy lady had sat down to cards in an inner room; and Lacy said, "Perhaps you had better not disturb her, Helen. Mary must be ill, indeed, to send for you; and my good Aunt Pontypool is not of the greatest assistance in the world under such circumstances. I will tell her when she has done her game; and, I suppose, my going with you is impos-

sible, according to the code of rules and ceremonies, I will come with her if you will send the carriage back for us."

Helen agreed to do so, and hurried down stairs ; a carriage was at the door with a servant in Lady Mary's livery, and when the steps were let down, Lacy seeing some one in it, asked, " Who is that ?" in reply to which the voice of Helen's little maid replied, " It is I, sir—Louisa."

" Is Lady Mary very ill ?" demanded Lacy.

" I don't know, sir," replied the girl ; and Helen entering the carriage, the door was closed and the vehicle drove off.

Lacy gazed after it for a moment, and then muttering " That does not look like either of Mary's carriages—but it may be Lady Pontypool's," he returned to the ball-room. On entering the room in which the card-players had been busy, he found the game at an end, and a change of arrangements taking place. He then told Lady Pontypool immediately what had occurred ; and while they were waiting to give the vehicle time to return, he asked casually what colour her carriage was painted.

" The same as Mary's," she answered—" green. Why, you have seen it a thousand times, Charles."

" But this was yellow," said Lacy, " this chariot that was sent for Helen. There is something strange about the business."

" Oh, I dare say they did not wait for any of our own, but got the first they could find," replied Lady Pontypool ; and thus quieted, Lacy remained for a few minutes longer by the side of the old lady. At length, however, he rose, and told a servant to see for Lady Pontypool's servants. The next moment, " Lady Pontypool's carriage stops the way !" was shouted as loudly as ever it had echoed through the doors of the Opera-house ; and leading her down, Lacy handed her in and followed. A few minutes brought them to the door of Lady Mary's dwelling, where, to Lady Pontypool's inquiry of how her niece was, the servant replied quietly, " Very well, my lady, I believe !"

Lacy took fright, and forgetting all politeness, ran past Lady Pontypool and entered the drawing-room. There sat Lady Mary Denham at a table, writing quite calmly—a little pale indeed, but bearing no other signs of illness in her whole appearance.

" Good God ! Mary, where is Helen ?" exclaimed Charles Lacy ; " they said you were ill !"

" Ill ! " replied Lady Mary—" Helen !—what do you mean, Charles ? I have not seen her ! "

" Good God ! " he cried, " then they have carried her off."

" Carried off Helen ! " exclaimed Lady Mary, starting up ; " impossible, Charles !—What has happened ? Tell me ! do tell me, my dear aunt, for Charles seems mad ! "

" I am mad, I believe ! " cried Lacy. But what between his incoherent account, and Lady Pontypool's desultory one, the truth was soon communicated to Mary Denham, who, acting with more prudence than either, called the servants, and asked such questions as very quickly elicited the following facts.—That none of them, except the coachman and footman, who had accompanied Helen and Lady Pontypool to the ball, had been out during the evening—that they, the coachman and footman, had remained waiting those ladies' return without ever leaving the neighbourhood of the house to which they went—that a person with a carriage had come to Lady Mary's not long after the other carriage had gone, and had sent up a note to Louisa, Miss Helen's maid ; upon which she had come down, telling one of the other servants that her lady had been taken ill at the ball and sent for her ; and that she had got into the carriage in waiting and driven away. Besides this, it appeared that some person had been asking manifold questions of one of the inferior servants the day before, but no correct description could be obtained. This was all that was to be learned, and the mind of Lacy was wandering over many a painful conjecture, when Lady Pontypool happened by chance to mention the name of Lord Adair.

Lacy instantly snatched up his hat and gloves, and was hurrying towards the door ; but ere he reached it he paused thoughtfully, saying, " He would never commit such an act!—yet it is as well to see. Did I not know that the regiment of that young rascal marched out this morning, I should think that he were the person ; but it cannot be."

Who was either of the two persons of whom he spoke, he left Lady Mary Pontypool to conjecture, and hurrying out of the house, strode onward to the dwelling of Lord Adair. It was now about twelve o'clock, and Lacy was kept some time, ere a servant, evidently disturbed in the midst of the act of undressing, opened the door and stared in the face of the untimely visitor. He asked at once for Mr. Adair, and the man replied that " he was at home, but

he believed in bed." The whole house had so little the air of one in which a plot had just been exploded, Lacy's belief in young Adair's innocence of all such actions was very much strengthened. He demanded to see him, however, and directed the servant to give his name. The man according ran up with the hand-lamp he carried, leaving Lacy in the dark in the vestibule; and there he could plainly hear the opening of Henry Adair's door, and the brief conversation to which his message gave rise.

"Captain Lacy!" said the young gentleman in a tone of surprise; "what can he want? but send him up, send him up directly."

Those few words dispelled Lacy's remaining doubts, and he certainly wished that he had not come; but as the matter was done, he followed the servant to Henry Adair's dressing-room, where he found him sitting partly undressed, with several volumes open on the table before him.

"Good evening to you, Lacy," he said, without tendering his hand; "what are your commands? for I take it for granted that your errand is weighty, to be borne at this time of night. Sit down, I beg."

"I have not time at present," answered Lacy, who had now determined on his line of conduct; "I am agitated and alarmed, Adair; and in that agitation and alarm, I have suspected you wrongly—at least, I will not say suspected—for even while I felt it my duty to come here and see you personally, I was sure that you were not a man to endeavour by unfair means to obtain the hand of a woman whose heart was given to another."

"What do you mean?" cried Henry Adair, starting up. "Who do you mean? Helen Adair! Unfair means! Something has happened, Lacy! Tell me all, I beg of you!"

Lacy in reply briefly explained what had occurred, and the agitation of Henry Adair on hearing it was scarcely less than his own.

"You could not believe me guilty of such a thing!" he cried. "Good God, I would sooner die! But I will help you in your search. I have a right—I am her cousin; and if I can deliver her and give her back to you, Lacy, that will be some consolation to me at least. To aid in making her happy is the brightest hope now left to me."

Lacy wrung his hand; and the other continued, drawing

on again his boots in order to join instantly in the search—“But do you suspect nobody else—is there no one whom you think likely to commit such an act?”

“Perhaps there may be!” replied Lacy; “but I will not mention his name, for I have been wrong once to-night, and I may be doing him injustice too. Indeed, I do not see how it is possible he can be the person; but I will take care to trace him out and ascertain.”

“Do so! do so!” replied Henry Adair—“go; make haste, and I in the mean time I will hurry round to all the gates. The people there know me so well from stopping often to speak as I ride through, that I shall soon hear who has passed; but do not wait for me, I will come to you as soon as I have learned any thing certain.”

Pleased with his eagerness, though sorry for the wearing effects of disappointment which he could not help reading in the countenance of young Adair—effects which had sadly changed him even in so short a space of time as four-and-twenty hours—Lacy hurried away to pursue his search. While he did so, Henry Adair hastily dressed himself again, and then bidding the servant sit up for him, he ran out into the streets. There putting himself into a fiacre, and paying the man largely to drive quick, he proceeded to all the gates, where, by dint of money and persuasions, he induced the *concierges* to give him the name of every stranger who had passed within the last two hours. There were several names in this catalogue that he knew, but none which offered the slightest probability of being attached to the person who had carried off Helen Adair.

But the report at the *Porte de Namur* still left very great room for conjecture. There, the man said, that as on that night so many people were coming in and going out to and from the great ball given by the *Duchesse de Rickemonde*, he had not of course been able to examine all the carriages, or take down all the names. The servants, he said, gave the names as the carriages past, and when he saw that they were carriages belonging to the town or the neighbourhood, he took no farther notice.

Thinking that the people of the *Octroi*, or receivers of the town toll, might have been more strict, to them he applied for information; but they replied that they only stopped persons entering the city, not those going out; and thus satisfied and disappointed, Henry Adair ordered the driver

to proceed to Lacy's quarters, in order to give him an account of what he had done, and to consult with more deliberation on some further plan of search.

CHAPTER IV.

WHILE Henry Adair had thus occupied himself in vain, Charles Lacy had accidentally gained some information which was calculated to confirm the suspicions which he already entertained, and to put him on the right track ; but at the same time he was interrupted in his pursuit by obstacles which he could not surmount. Within a hundred yards of the house of Lord Adair, he thought he heard a distant drum, and then was very certain that he could distinguish, proceeding from the barracks in the lower town, the peculiar harsh bugle-call of some of the Flemish regiments. The next moment an English officer approached in regiments, and just as he was passing him in the obscurity of the street, Lacy recognized Major Kennedy.

“ You see I was not wrong in my anticipations, Charles,” said Kennedy, as he grasped his hand ; “ I felt sure it would be so.”

“ Then, in the name of Heaven, why did you not tell me ?” cried Lacy, his first thought turning to Helen ; but the moment after he added, recollecting himself, “ But you must be talking of something else, Kennedy—what has happened ?”

“ Do you not hear the drum ?” cried Kennedy ; “ why, despatches have been received from Blucher. The French have crossed the Sambre in force, and are advancing upon Brussels by Charleroi and Fleurus. Orders to march are already at the barracks, and, as I hear, all the other corps at Ath, Murbecke, Grammont, and Braine le Comte have been ordered upon Nivelles. I saw Hay galloping as hard as ever he could towards Enghein, but I had no time to ask, nor he to answer questions.”

“ Good God ! to march to-night !” cried Lacy ; “ Kennedy, it is impossible that I can go.”

“ Lacy !” cried Kennedy, in a tone that left all farther observation unnecessary—“ Lacy !”

“ But you do not know what has happened,” replied his

friend in a state of agitation impossible to describe : " Helen—Helen Adair has been carried off by some one, from the Duchess's ball, and I am now in search of them."

" Willingly carried off !" cried Kennedy ; " impossible ; Lacy, she loved you too well, that was evident—there is a mistake."

" No, no ! not willingly !" replied Lacy, " by a cursed artifice, which so far took me in, as to make me hand her into the carriage myself ;"—and in a hurried manner, he detailed all that had taken place in regard to the event which so painfully agitated him.

" Be calm, Lacy ! be calm !" replied Kennedy ; " the matter is not so bad as your anxiety for Miss Adair makes you imagine. She has her maid with her, you say : that will be both a comfort and assistance to her ; and to us it is better still, for it shows that the only design of the persons who have her in their power is to frighten her into a marriage with some one else ; which, if I have any knowledge of human nature, she will be found the last person on earth to consent to. But what can be their motive ? If I understood right, her fortune is but small."

" Nothing," answered Lacy, " nothing to make it any consideration to the avaricious. But do you not remember, Kennedy, when we were down at Alton, some stranger getting into the park, and looking in at the windows ?"

" I remember it well," replied Kennedy, " and I remember that you thought the fellow looked like young Williamson of the _____. A thousand to one if he knows Miss Adair, and is in love with her _____. But he is such a puppy, he can be in love with nothing but himself."

" Ay ! but he does both know her, and I rather imagine has proposed for her," answered Lacy, " and as this is just such a trick as I should conceive he might perpetrate, and think it very fine, all my suspicions would turn upon him, if his regiment had not marched upon Nivelles."

" Oh, that is nothing," cried Kennedy eagerly ; the fellow is in town—I saw him this very night—close to Mary's house too. You remember I left you there about eight ; and not a hundred yards down the street I met a man in a large cloak, which, as it was raining, he had got up to his mouth and chin ; but I knew him perfectly well, for there was a lamp just over our heads. I did not take any notice, though we do bow and all that, when we meet ; but I was

vexed and agitated myself, and he did not seem to wish to be known."

"I will go and horsewhip him till I leave him not a whole place in his foul skin," cried Lacy. But Kennedy caught his arm.

"No, no, Lacy!" he said, "you are not yourself to-night, Charles. You must march with the regiment. The young rascal is far enough by this time, depend upon it; and the finding him out, and the release of Miss Adair, can be quite as well managed by the police of this town—who are most active and shrewd—as by yourself. Honour and duty call upon you imperatively to think of nothing else but the service of your country at the present moment. Let us go back to Mary, inform her of our suspicions in regard to this fellow Williamson, request her during our absence to send for some of the principal agents of police, tell them all that we know, and offer a hundred napoleons on the recovery of Miss Adair."

"More than that! more than that!" cried Lacy, "we must make the reward such as to insure the loss of not a moment, and the employment of every means. I will leave my own servant too, Kennedy, to pursue the track. He is a shrewd and clever man, and will not easily be thrown out. Good God! it is very unfortunate that we are ordered to march directly. I am afraid that my thoughts will be but far from my duties. But I must go, I suppose?"

"Beyond a doubt, Charles," replied Kennedy; "but let us first return to Lady Mary, and tell her what we have done, and what we propose."

Lacy linked his arm in that of his friend, and turning their steps the contrary way, they hurried along the streets, in which the sound of the drum and the bugle was now becoming loud and frequent, while every five or six steps officers and soldiers, hurrying along to their respective regiments, denoted that the whole of the little world of Brussels was agitated with the bustle of military preparations. These sounds had already reached the ear of Mary Denham, and she was sitting pale and anxious, waiting the return of Lacy. Surprise and pleasure certainly did light up her beautiful features and gay blue eyes for a time; but oh! how many feelings chequered each other in the bosoms of the little party there assembled, as they conversed eagerly over what had befallen, and what were the measures neces-

ary in consequence ! How many an apprehension, how many a chilling and a gloomy shadow, did the coming days cast before them ! But there is still a policy to be practised in human life, not alone with others, but also with our own hearts. All Lacy's feelings were naturally absorbed in the situation of Helen Adair ; he thought not of the coming battle—he thought not of danger or of death ; he only remembered the march, and the perils before him, as things which withdrew him from the pursuits on which he would willingly have bent all the fiery energies of his nature. But with Kennedy, and Lady Mary, there was policy in occupying all their thoughts as far as possible with the artifice which had been practised in regard to Helen ; and they both gave way to it, talking of nothing, but that, till, towards two in the morning, Kennedy and Lacy felt themselves compelled to go. But then, too, Kennedy would suffer no impression of gloom to appear. The fond and affectionate farewell had already been spoken, and with it had mingled all those tender feelings which unnerve for the time the strongest heart ; but now he spoke with cheerful and confident hope, and left Mary Denham comforted and tranquil in comparison with what she would have been had he given way to the sensations which were in truth within his bosom.

The weather was showery, and not very bright ; but the grey dawn was breaking slowly as the two young officers took their way to their regiment, from which they had already been absent too long. Lacy, whose ideas of military duty were naturally strict, reproached himself somewhat with his delay, and remembered several things which he could have wished done in regard to the troop he commanded ; but Kennedy relieved him as he spoke upon the matter by saying, " Why, I took an unjustifiable liberty with you, Lacy ; and as we had talked over the subject before, and I had time this afternoon to spare, I spoke with Sergeant Jones on all those points, and went through the stables myself. I think you will find every thing prepared to march ; and provided all be ready, and duty well done, you know the good Colonel is not harsh, and can make allowances for a moment like this."

Kennedy was not mistaken in the commanding officer's disposition. They found him, indeed, in all the bustle of orders and preparation ; and he remarked, " You are late, Major Kennedy—you are late, Captain Lacy. We shall

march in an hour, gentlemen. You are late, I am afraid. Pray do not let us perform our duty ill!"

Lacy briefly explained, and the veteran nodded, saying, "Sufficient! sufficient! I did not mean any reprimand—I never knew you neglect duty, gentlemen—I was sure there was good cause. But now, pray be quick! an hour is the latest I can give!"

By the time an hour was over, however, and the fresh morning air was somewhat warmed by the rising sun, both Lacy and Kennedy were in the saddle, and the regiment prepared to march. The old commander's eyes looked bright, and full of fiery spirits as he gazed along the line of gallant men, whom he was leading against the enemies of his country; and he could not resist his inclination to say something about having a cut at those dancing Frenchmen.

"I like this promptitude, Major Kennedy," he said, "I like this promptitude! The fellows all look as eager to march as hunters at the edge of the cover. I like it very much, Major Kennedy! we shall have now one good cut at those dancing Frenchmen, I hope, and make an end of them." The words were spoken loud enough for a good many of the men to hear, as the Colonel had become somewhat deaf under the roaring of cannon, and mentally communicated his own infirmity to every one else.

The time came, however; the word was given; and while multitudes thronged the streets of Brussels even at that early hour, regiment after regiment marched out of the city, and took the way on toward those fields where the last great triumph of England was to be achieved. For a considerable way along the road, Charles Lacy was accompanied by Henry Adair, who communicated to him all that he had done; and with an eager zeal, which seemed for the time to annihilate all his personal feelings, he promised his rival to spare no exertion which could restore Helen to him again. Lacy doubted not his sincerity, and trusted fully to his promises, for he knew that Henry Adair must be judged differently from other men; and after having ridden on together for two or three miles, they parted.

The way, as every one knows, from Brussels to Quatre-Bras is long, and the roads were then heavy with continued rain, so that never did an army destined to fight the instant it arrived, perform a more weary and exhausting march.

Passing Waterloo and Genappe, Lacy with his regiment, about a quarter before two, began to hear the distant roar of artillery and fire-arms in advance ; and every one well divined that the Prince of Orange, or some of the other detached corps of the allied army, had already arrived at the point of concentration, and were endeavouring to keep the enemy in check. If any one had previously felt weariness, or had longed to hault for a few moments' rest, these sounds put an end to such sensations in a moment. The foot-soldier raised his head, and marched on with renewed vigour ; the horseman sat his horse more firmly ; and even the noble beasts themselves pricked up the quivering ear, and listened eagerly to the distant fight. Thus regiment after regiment poured along the road, till reaching the little slope which first displays the village of Quatre-Bras, they came rapidly into the presence of the enemy.

It was, like every battle, a scene of great confusion, and, to an unexperienced eye, offered nothing but indistinct masses of troops wheeling about in an irregular manner, involved and half-hidden in clouds of smoke. But the glance of Charles Lacy, which had scanned so many fields of contest in the Peninsula, sought out, in the only way which, on such occasions, can give one any general conception of the events that are occurring around, the various principal points of attack and defence, and limited his chief attention to those places. The farm-house itself—the wood upon the right of the field—the ravine below it—the steep banks, and old chateau on the left, were evidently the spots, especially the wood, on the possession of which the fortunes of the day would hang. The only cavalry regiment on the field was his own, for the greater part of the horse had been cantoned beyond the Dender, and had not yet come up : but bodies of infantry were continually arriving ; and at length Lacy perceived, at a short distance on the left, the regiment to which young John Williamson was attached. So near was he, indeed, that he could distinguish the very person against whom his suspicions were directed, and would have given much to ride up and punish him on the spot. It required some command over himself to refrain, but he did do so ; and the infantry regiment, marching on through the rye, was charged by a régiment of French cuirassiers just as it was approaching what is called the Little Chateau. The English infantry immediately

formed in square ; but, in the hurry of the moment, a company was left out, and without other resource, threw itself into the garden of the neighbouring house. At that instant, however, the dispositions of the Duke of Wellington required a change in the position of Lacy's regiment, and he saw no more of what was passing in that part of the field.

But it is not my intention to describe the battle of Quatre-Bras ; not only because, notwithstanding her inclination to aid all who were attacked, and the many glorious achievements in which she was constantly engaged, my Aunt Pontypool was not present herself—for which, by the way, the Duke of Wellington has much reason to be thankful, as she would certainly have contrived by some means to make him lose the battle—but also because this book is intended alone to contain a quiet and domestic story ; and still farther, because the battles of Waterloo and Quatre-Bras have been described and bepainted by various deserving persons quite sufficiently already. Suffice it to say then, that the wood on the left was gallantly defended by the Guards, and that all the efforts of the French to dislodge them proved vain—that every attempt to force the centre of the English position was also frustrated—and that, in the end, Marshal Ney, finding his enemies multiplying, and his soldiers fearfully diminishing, thought fit to make a retrograde movement, leaving the ground in possession of the British.

Thus ended the battle of Quatre-Bras ; and during the night the other corps of the allied forces which had been directed to concentrate at that point, arrived upon the field, forming a sufficient army to justify an attack upon the French next morning. Such a measure was generally expected by the whole ; but during the action at Quatre-Bras, a severe cannonade had been heard on the left ; and early on the morning of the 17th, a despatch was received by the Duke of Wellington, announcing that, after the hard-contested battle of Ligny, Blucher had been obliged to retreat. A similar movement became necessary in consequence on the part of the British forces, and at ten o'clock the infantry began the retrograde march, which took place, upon Genappe,

No little anxiety was now felt for the successful issue of that dangerous proceeding—a retreat in face of a superior enemy. The British soldier does not like retreat, and on

the present occasion even the officers could not but look forward with alarm to the advantage which the enemy might take of a march to the rear, through the narrow village of Genappe, and across the bridge over the Dyle. Skilfully, however, did the General mask his retreat; and it would seem that a great part of the army had passed the point of danger before Napoleon became aware of what was taking place. Even then, the only measure which he took to harass the British retreat, was by throwing forward in pursuit a large body of cavalry. One or two charges, however, led by the gallant Marquis of Anglesea, taught the French lancers to keep at a respectful distance; and even the rear-guard which had masked the retreat, passed safely through Genappe, and, towards seven o'clock, reached the rising ground between that town and Soignies.

A considerable length of time was occupied in taking up the positions assigned to the different regiments; but ere night had closed, Lacy gained the long-wished-for-moment, and hurried towards the regiment to which young Williamson belonged.

The first person he encountered when he reached the spot was the quarter-master, and, from him Lacy immediately demanded where Ensign John Williamson was to be found.

"I am afraid at Quatre-Bras, sir," replied the quarter-master; "in forming square, one company was left out in our hurry. He was with it, and none of them have come in. Some got into a garden, and I believe surrendered; but others I myself saw cut down by the cuirassiers."

Charles Lacy turned away with very mixed feelings, and thought of seeking Colonel Adair, whose regiment lay towards the extreme right; but he remembered that the only tidings which he could give would be of the most painful and agitating nature; and he determined, therefore, to leave the mind of the veteran officer at peace till the result of the battle either left him free to act, or confounded individual considerations in general calamity. With this resolution Lacy returned to his men, and waited with the rest of the army for the dawning of that day which was to decide the fate of Europe; but the mind of no one, perhaps, in all the forces there assembled, was so painfully agitated by many feelings as that of Charles Lacy. Others might obtain repose and sleep to refresh them for the coming strife; but

Lacy closed not an eye, and with his heart burning with indignation and with apprehension for her he loved, he looked forward with anxiety for the coming battle, more as an event which must take place ere he could be at liberty to pursue his own particular plans, than as an encounter in which life was to be risked, or glory to be gained.

CHAPTER V.

In the mean time, it may be asked what had become of Helen Adair ; and we shall now proceed to tell the dearly beloved reader, inasmuch as this simple and straight-forward tale is written with the purpose not only of telling, like an Old Baily witness, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but also of telling the whole truth at once. Concealments are all in vain ; an author, for the time, should be so far like the reader's wife as to have no concealments from him, teasing him a little every now and then to show authority, and taking care not to invert the order of his facts so as to tell the end of the story before the beginning is told ; but at the same time letting every thing have its natural place and position, forbearing all sleight of hand tricks, jugglery, or even charlatanism.

The moment, then, Helen Adair was in the carriage which had been sent for her, the door was shut, and the vehicle drove off with fury ; the horses were young and spirited, and turning the corner with a tremendous sweep had nearly jammed the carriage against another which was coming up ; the wheels did grate against each other, and Helen as well as her little maid Louisa uttered a faint scream. Her terror, however, was increased by finding that the horses were now going at full gallop, and she could plainly see by the glimpses of lamp-light the arms of the coachman making what appeared ineffectual efforts to hold them in. Helen was not naturally courageous ; she had indeed a moral power over her own emotions sufficient to prevent her fears from becoming apparent, when the expression of them would have been wrong, and sufficient to quell them at all times so far as to leave her faculties free to act ; but still she was timid by nature—not precisely from a mere calculating love of life, for she never, even at this moment of alarm, thought

of how happy a thing life is, how bright, how cheerful!—nor was her timidity rendered greater in the present instance by her attachment to life having increased under the bright prospect opened to her in her engagement to the man she loved, and by all the calm, sweet, domestic joys which hope and imagination gathered from the picture, like flowers from fairy-land, and laid before her. It was not love of life at all, yet neither did her timidity exactly proceed from fears of death, for in the holy sunshine of her heart were few of those dark shadows to be found which make death fearful. The sins—for who, amongst the brightest and the best, are sinless?—were few and light, and the hope, and the faith were strong in her bosom. She could look back and say, “In nothing have I erred willingly or knowingly through presumption, or pride, or obstinacy; I have tried to do my best, and though obedience may have been as it always must be, imperfect, yet it has not been intentionally neglected.” And she could look forward and say, “My trust in God and his mercy is strong, and I feel no fear that there will not be atonement made for me!” No—the timidity which she felt was the timidity of impulse, produced generally in women by a certain openness in the structure of the nerves, which permits the galvanic, or, as some people call it, the nervous fluid, to run along them with a greater degree of rapidity than it does in men. Thus, finding herself carried on at desperate speed; hearing the madlike clatter of the horses’ feet; feeling the carriage reel along with involuntary whirls, like the tin canister tied to the tail of a persecuted dog; and seeing, what she believed to be, the ineffectual efforts of the coachman to stop the horses, she naturally concluded they had run away, and held tight by one of the holders of the carriage, with doubts and apprehensions concerning every post in the road.

In this maze of uncertainties called the world, whether we go quick or slow, the, “*what is to come next!*” is always the subject of anxiety, and the question to our own hearts. It is a question put in a thousand different tones, it is true—sometimes with a yawn, sometimes with a sigh, sometimes with a tear, sometimes with a smile, as listlessness, or memory, or human suffering, or heavenly hope may have power over us at the time. But it was a question which Helen’s heart repeated at every street corner, as the vehicle whirled furiously along, till at length it was an,

swered by a large pair of gates *coming next*, and the carriage dashing like lightning through the Porte de Namur. All she could hear was that the soldier at the gate vociferated something to the coachman, while both coachman and footman bellowed forth something again to the man at the gate, which seemed quite satisfactory to his feelings, as he put his pipe again into the corner of his mouth, and the carriage rushed with more fury than ever down the deep descent.

Now Helen, although she had been in Brussels some time, was not well acquainted with that city, especially by lamp-light, as she had been but little out in the streets therof except in a carriage, and that in the daylight. She had seen gardens and parks, as they call them there, and manifold green trees, and houses, and gates, and other things of the kind ; so that when she rushed through the Porte de Namur, she had no idea whatever that she was getting out of the precincts of the city of Brussels, and only exclaimed, "Good heaven ! why does not somebody stop the horses ?"

This was not exactly the first word she had spoken, for as soon as she had got into the carriage, she had began by asking Louisa Green a question about her cousin Mary's illness, which question, however, was stopped in the middle by a sudden conviction that the horses had run away. Louisa's answer, whatever it might have been, was strangled in its birth by the same conviction ; and the poor girl, terrified in no slight degree, only sobbed out on the present occasion, " Oh, ma'am, they can't ! they have run away."

" Sit still—sit still !" cried Helen, as Louisa leaned forward to look out ; " sit still, Louisa, and keep quiet !" But still, on went the horses thundering down the hill, and the old gentleman at the barrier, instead of attempting to stop them, pointed to the carriage, saying to another personage on horseback, " Is that it ?" and being answered in the affirmative, gave the stranger change, and let the carriage pass.

To the bottom of the hill in the same manner did the vehicle proceed—yea, and up a part of the opposite ascent, which is not near so steep ; but gradually the pace slackened—from a gallop it was changed into a canter, from a canter was metamorphosed into a trot, and from a trot relented into a walk.

Helen breathed again, and said, " Thank God !" and

then withdrawing herself from the corner into which she had sunk, she let down one of the windows and looked out, when to her astonishment she found herself in the country. Not a house, except some low cottages, and a good Flemish dwelling in an orchard, was near her ; and the horses, after their furious drive, were plodding quietly up the remainder of a long heavy hill, a considerable part of which they had cleared under the impetus with which they had come down the opposite descent.

“ What can be the meaning of this ? ” exclaimed Helen, with a sinking feeling at her heart ; “ Louisa, we are out of the town ! There must be some mistake.”

“ It looks like the country indeed, ma’am,” replied the girl ; “ I suppose the horses have run their own way—but how do you feel now, ma’am ? I hope it has not made you worse.”

“ Oh ! I was only frightened,” replied Helen, somewhat quieted by the calm tone in which the girl spoke. “ But what is the matter with Mary ? —this will delay us sadly, I am afraid—what was the matter with Lady Mary ? ”

“ I do not know indeed, ma’am,” replied Louisa ; “ I did not know she was ill till Captain Lacy mentioned it just now ! ”

“ Why, she sent you for me, did not she ? ” exclaimed Helen, turning to gaze upon the girl, who now, on her part, looked up with no small surprise.

“ No, ma’am ! ” replied Louisa, “ she did not say anything to me at all ! She looked a little pale I thought, for I met her on the stairs as I was coming down—when you sent for me.”

“ I sent ! ” cried Helen, “ I never sent ! ”

“ Why, ma’am, they brought me a note from you,” said the girl ; but Helen replied by exclaiming—“ Louisa, they are taking us farther and farther from the town, I see. What can be the meaning of all this ? ”—and letting down the front window, she called to the coachman, demanding where he was driving her. But the man turned round and answered her in Flemish, which, as may be easily supposed, was totally unintelligible to her. His face was also perfectly strange to her, and the next moment she had an opportunity of discovering that the proceeding in which the men were engaged had nothing accidental in its nature ; for the footman who had hitherto remained behind the carriage, and

had jumped down at the hill, now sprang upon the coach-box, saying, “ Tachez de les faire aller ;” upon which the man applied his whip sturdily to the horses, showing plainly that he understood French. Helen, thereupon, again leaned forward, and remonstrated loudly ; but the two men only held a laughing conversation together, and the next moment reaching the brow of the hill, the horses again felt the lash, and set off, though not so fast as before, yet with quite sufficient rapidity to prevent Helen’s entreaties or remonstrances from being heard or attended to.

“ What can be the meaning of this, Louisa ?” she cried, sinking back in the carriage, and endeavouring to elicit from the maid some facts which might throw even a degree of light upon the transaction under which she was suffering ; but the girl was as surprised and frightened as herself—perhaps, indeed, more so, for Helen’s better knowledge showed her that no very serious evil could be intended towards her, though the consequences might be painful and distressing in a thousand ways ; while poor Louisa, whose information was of course limited by circumstances, and whose ideas, in regard to foreigners, and foreign countries were both vague and prejudiced, summoned up a thousand horrible apprehensions in which her mistress did not participate. Murder was the climax of the various catastrophes she was to undergo ; and wringing her hands, she exclaimed, “ Oh ! why did I come ? why did I come ? My heart sunk, I declare, from the first.”

Helen wanted comfort herself, but yet, with a true charitable heart, she gave her companion as much of that balm as she could, and when she discovered which way the mind’s fears tended, did certainly succeed in diminishing her terrors. The next thing was, to collect her thoughts, and endeavour to discover who were the persons who had thus taken possession of her, and what was really their object ; and for this purpose, as soon as the carriage reached another hill, which compelled the horses to go more slowly, she again opened the front window, and in as calm, but determined a tone as she could assume, attempted to reason with the men on the box, mingling threats and promises together, but in vain. The men sometimes talked together, and sometimes laughed ; and when they condescended to speak at all, it was only to utter, the one Flemish, the other,

that most maddening of all French phrases, “ *Soyez tranquille, madame, soyez tranquille !* ”

They afforded Helen, unintentionally, however, some information ; for by looking behind once or twice, they induced her to do so also, when she perceived, through the dim and moonless air of the night, two men on horseback following the vehicle at a short distance. She had conceived some hope of the carriage stopping at the next barrier for the toll, so frequent in Flanders, but she was disappointed, and now perceived that wherever any obstruction was likely to produce a halt, one of the horsemen rode on before, and the whole party was allowed to pass without farther question. Her only hope now was to appeal to the people of the inn, wherever the vehicle stopped to change horses, feeling very sure, that in a country so orderly and well-regulated as Flanders, lawful aid and authority would soon be procured to set her free, if she could but make her situation known. But the carriage drove on, and at the top of a hill, in climbing which she had made the effectual attempt to influence the driver and his companion, the turning of the road afforded her a glimpse of that luminous appearance on the clouds which indicates the situation of a large city by night ; while, borne upon the air, came distinct and clear the sound of bugles and of drums.

Other feelings then made her heart sink with apprehensions, not for herself indeed, though the doubts and fears of her own distressing situation gave tensfold edge to those which she entertained for Lacy and her father. Still on rolled the carriage, and, instead of even stopping at any house to water the horses, the coachman paused for a moment to let them drink at a little brook which crossed the road. Louisa, more eager, and less thoughtful than her mistress, instantly put out her hand from the window, and endeavoured to open the door, determined to jump out and run away. But she found the door locked, and the next moment the carriage was again in motion. A little farther on, a wood of tall trees flanked the road on either side ; and soon after, the causeway issued forth on a wide undulating plain, broken by several dips of the ground and some sharp ravines ; while the moon, breaking for a moment through the clouds, showed the forest sweeping round to the left, and the whole face of the country covered by rich crops of waving corn.

There was nothing to interrupt the view as the eye wan-

dered over the expanse in the moonlight; and Helen mentally asked herself, "What place can this be?" A little village with its church on the right had been past before, but the whole of its small world were fast asleep; and now for some miles scarcely a house was to be seen near the road. The moon too soon withdrew her glimpses from the earth; the clouds rolled over her fair face; and the rain began to patter on the roof of the carriage which hurried poor Helen Adair along her unwilling way. Fatigue also was added to annoyance, and tended farther to depress her spirits.

On first discovering the deceit which had been practised upon her, she had felt comparatively little apprehension. She had been alarmed, it is true, and highly indignant; but she was certain, that in such a country as Belgium, she would soon be able to procure redress and obtain protection from the law. But now, as time passed, and the distance from Brussels increased, and weariness and the melancholy uncertainty of all the objects around one in a night journey, had their effect upon her mind, imagination took an active part against her. She remembered every thing that could be painful and annoying as a consequence of the circumstances in which she was placed:—what might not Lacy think, what might not Lacy do?—what would be the feelings of her father, and of Mary Denham? Did not the fact of some one having sent for her maid in her name, seem as if she herself were privy to the whole business?—and might not those who had her in their power, take means to make her friends believe that such was the case? And even when she should be freed, with such men as her father and Lacy interested in her fate, would not the consequences be certain bloodshed, when they discovered who was the person that had committed so daring an offence? Every thing, in short, within the bare bounds of possibility which could cloud the future and destroy the day-dream of her after happiness, was called up to render the present more miserable; while the melancholy patterning of the rain—the jolting of the vehicle over the uneasy Flemish pavement—and the double darkness of the night, added all those little accessories to which fancy is the most obliged when she wishes to render her master or mistress completely miserable.

It may be asked if Helen never diversified her unpleasant

contemplations, by endeavouring to guess who was the person, or were the persons, to whom she was indebted for this enforced journey ; and it is but candid to say that she really did ; that she revolved the matter a thousand times in her mind, and always returned to the same point. It would be doubtless more interesting to make her, in going round the wide circle of chances, fix upon any body but the right one ; and it certainly does often happen,—amidst the myriads of possibilities that do exist in regard to every event of which we do not know the cause,—that human calculation, misled by some accidental concurrence, comes to an erroneous conclusion, and knocks the wrong man down. But truth must be told, and certainly Helen at once fixed upon the person in regard to whom the reader has already made up his mind. To him also she always returned, after having considered the matter afresh ; and she did so, indeed, not without cause.

When she thought of Henry Adair, there were one or two circumstances that might well justify a doubt—his passionate nature, his heedless and eccentric character, and the rash and foolish manner in which he had acted in his first acquaintance with her ; but still, in all his actions and in all his words, there was something so straightforward, so candid, so upright, that Helen would not suffer a suspicion of him to rest upon her mind for a moment. Besides, he was a gentleman in all his thoughts and all his feelings—an odd and eccentric gentleman, it is true ; but still there was the diamond, though uncut.

Ensign John Williamson, on the contrary, was not a gentleman, though a great deal had been done to make him so. He had been sent to a clergyman's family as a parlour boarder, where only one or two noblemen's sons were received ; he had eke gone to Eton, and had then entered the army ; all things calculated in themselves to gentlemanize a man, if such a thing were possible. But there was once a conversation took place between two friends of mine, brother and sister, which exemplified Mr. John Williamson's case completely. They were in a country house, with rainy weather and nothing to do—

“ You look very listless, Frank,” said Emily.

“ My dear sister, I have had nothing to do for this fortnight,” replied Frank.

“ Had you not better find something to do ?” asked Emily,

"I would join the fox-hounds if I had but a pair of leather breeches," said Frank.

"There is an old buff paduasoy gown of my great-grandmother's up stairs, as thick as leather, for it stands alone," said Emily. "Could you not have it made into what you want? My great-grandfather wore such, for I have seen them in his picture."

"My dear girl," replied Frank; "do what you will, you cannot make a pair of leather breeches out of a paduasoy petticoat,—nor a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

If ever man attempted to make a pair of leather breeches out of a paduasoy petticoat, it was Mr. Williamson, senior, when he sent his son to Eton; and though, when he came back and went into the army, Mr. Williamson *ître* did not find it out, other people did. There, as in the case of the breeches, was the shape, and the form, and the stitching—ay, and as Emily cunningly contrived it, the colour too; but still, the stuff was not there, and John Williamson, junior, was no more a gentleman than leather is paduasoy.

Thus, then, a good foundation was left for any ungentlemanly act; and Helen well remembered, that when as a boy, young Williamson—his father being then less wealthy than he afterwards became—was brought as a great favour to Colonel Adair's house, he was full of all sort of tricks and stratagems, which his father greatly admired, and augured thence that he would become a great general; for he was destined even then for the army. But when he told Colonel Adair of his anticipations and their cause, Colonel Adair shook his head, observing—though not to the father—that there were two sorts of manœuvring, one of which suited the law better than the army. All this, Helen remembered and thought of; and she also remembered having heard the young gentleman in his riper years, when his attachment to herself was beginning first to annoy her, declare in a very gallant, and what he supposed, pleasing tone, that there was nothing which a man ought not to do to obtain a woman he loved; that if she refused him twenty times, he should persevere; and then, if she drove him to any rash act to win her, it was her own fault. There can be no doubt that he thought this vapouring very significant of deep and impassioned feelings; but Helen always avoided him afterwards, and now recollected it to his disadvantage.

With such thoughts chequering her sad and gloomy anti-

cipations, weary, desponding, unhappy, Helen passed nearly four hours ; during which the horses had never stopped for one moment, except to drink at the little stream as before mentioned. She amused herself sometimes, it is true, by talking to her little maid, Louisa ; and soothed herself by endeavouring to soothe her. At other times, she remained sunk back in the carriage, giving herself up to her own pleasant thoughts ; and only able to resolve upon one thing, which was to make her situation loudly heard as soon as ever the carriage stopped ; and she calculated justly, that it could not go on much farther without fresh horses. At one moment she thought she heard the challenge of a sentry, and then several voices speaking, and she started forward to observe ; but the carriage rolled on, and she saw nothing but a wood and a farm-house upon the left of the road, and an old chateau on the right, dimly marked through the first faint effort at twilight, made by the rising of a new day. The road then rose a little, and the carriage paused about a quarter of a mile farther on, while the two horsemen who had hitherto followed, rode on. Helen gazed eagerly from the window, bidding Louisa tell her if she saw any one approach her side of the vehicle. No one was to be seen, however ; but the next moment a voice was heard, exclaiming, " *Voyons, voyons !*" while another replied, " *Mais, Monsieur, je vous dis que ce n'est que deux dames.*"

" *Mai-i-i-i-s,*" cried the other voice, with a terrible prolongation of sound, " *voyons ces dames !*" and in another minute several people with a lantern surrounded the carriage. The person at their head seemed an officer of either a French or Flemish regiment, for their dress was at that time so similar that they could hardly be recognized the one from the other ; but he had the air of a gentleman, and was moreover an elderly man, so that Helen, though her heart beat violently, had no hesitation in addressing herself to him. One of the horsemen who was beside him attempted to stop her, but the old soldier returned a sharp " *Taisez vous, Monsieur !*" and advanced with a bow to the side of the carriage. Helen's tale was soon told ; and the multitude of violent exclamations which it produced, both from the old officer himself and those who stood by him, showed sufficiently that it differed essentially from that which had been previously delivered by the worthy on horseback, in

whom the old gentleman now turned for explanation, beginning with a “Comment, coquin!” and ending with words which do not require repetition. The man, of course, endeavoured to justify himself, declaring that he was but an agent—that the Monsieur Anglais who had hired, and paid them for what they had done, with a promise of a still larger reward if they delivered the lady safe to people whom he had specified at Namur, had positively assured him that the lady was his wife, privately married; and that she was so, he added, he had every reason to believe, as she got willingly into the carriage; for corroboration of which he appealed to the man who had enacted footman, and was still seated on the box. The brother, thus asked, of course said his brother was *not a thief*, or in other words declared that Helen had come quite willingly, and had brought her maid with her; but the effect of all the eloquence was immediately destroyed by Helen calmly addressing the old officer again, and saying, “Try, sir, to open either of the doors of the carriage, and you will see in a moment whether I have been brought here willingly.” The old officer laid his hand upon the handle, as a new witness cited, and the testimony he received from it was quite satisfactory. In a voice which admitted no farther question, he said, “Call up the guard, and put these four men under arrest. Open the door, sir! whoever has got the key.”

The key was produced, and the door of the carriage opened, and advancing to the side again, he addressed Helen in a kindly but a grave tone, calculated to impress the junior officers, by whom he was surrounded, with respect for the young and unprotected girl who was thus thrown into their hands. “Madam,” he said, “if, as I judge by your accent, you are an English lady, I have the honour of informing you that you have been brought by these men within the outposts of the French army; but make your mind perfectly at ease, for although his Majesty the Emperor has determined to drive the English and Prussians out of Belgium, yet, of course, we look upon a lady always as an ally, and therefore you may rest satisfied that on the very first opportunity you shall be returned safely to your friends, and in the meantime will receive every attention that French officers can show.”

Helen, who had never doubted that she was speaking to a Belgian, had turned a little faint at hearing that she had

fallen into the hands of the enemy, but she felt what was due to herself, and to a person who seemed disposed to treat her with kindness ; and she therefore replied, " I am, sir, the daughter of a British officer of some rank ; and, as brave men of all nations feel a respect for each other, I am sure, for my father's sake, you will give me that protection which he would give a daughter of yours under the same circumstances. But is it not possible to send me back to-night ? "

" I am afraid not, madam," answered the old officer. " The horses which have brought you are quite knocked up — all that the neighbourhood supplied have been taken for the purposes of transport, and the people have all fled from the little farm-house of Quatre-Bras down below ; but if you will trust to the protection of old Jean Marc, chef-de-battallion of the — regiinent, he will take as much care of you, madam, as he would of one of his own daughters, or of his cross," — and he touched the ribbon at his button. — " To-morrow, we may find means to send you back, but in the meantime you will meet with some accommodation, though not very good, at the place called the Petit Chateau, here, where we are quartered, and where the old woman of the house still remains. — Drive the horses into the court," he continued ; and walking by the side till the vehicle reached the door; he handed Helen out and led her into the saloon.

The house was nearly filled with soldiers, but the greater part of them were sleeping ; and though Helen's extreme beauty and gay ball dress attracted sufficient attention to be excessively annoying, she was subjected to no rudeness ; and the old officer sat by her side and engaged her in conversation concerning her late adventure, while the woman of the house prepared for her the room which the commander of the post had originally retained for himself. As soon as his own very scanty baggage was removed from it, he conducted Helen thither, and bowing low at the door, left her to repose.

Helen could almost have wept with joy and agitation, and Louisa, who understood just enough of French to comprehend the general tenor of what was passing around her, did weep outright. To find plenty of locks and bolts upon the inside of her door, was a farther comfort to Helen Adair ; and after talking over the whole of their late adventures with Louisa Green she lay down in hopes of obtaining a few

hours' sleep. Her mind, however, had been too much agitated for slumber to come readily to her eyelids, and the day had already fully dawned, so that there was more light than needful in the room. At length, however, weariness and exhaustion prevailed ; Louisa, by her side, had long been buried in the arms of the drowsy god, and there is something very infectious in the sight of slumber : Helen's eyes grew heavy, and her thoughts confused ; then came an instant of complete forgetfulness—but the next moment she started up with a feeling of alarm : All was still, however ; and laying down her head upon the pillow once more, she fell into a sound, deep sleep.

How long she had slept she knew not, when something awoke her in terror. Louisa was already up and at the window, and when Helen spoke the poor girl turned round, with a face as pale as death.

“ What is the matter ? ” cried Helen—“ what is the matter, Louisa ? ” But, ere the girl could answer any thing, but, “ Oh, madam ! oh, Miss Helen ! ” the roar of cannon, and then a roll of musketry, told their own tale ; and starting up, Helen too ran to the window. The scene that presented itself was that strange one—the beginning of a battle. There was the calm, sweet country—there were the waving crops of tall rye—there were the green, unconscious trees ; and the only objects which spoke man's foul and fiend-like contention, were the appearance of several regiments on the opposite upland, a few bayonets and cannon in the hamlet below, and here and there a waving wreath of white smoke hanging amongst the trees, where the firing had taken place.

“ Open the door, Louisa ! ” cried Helen ; “ run down and see if you can find Monsieur Marc—that gentleman who spoke to us last night. Ask him what we had better do ? —where we had better go ? ” But poor Louisa at the very proposal turned such a face of helpless terror upon her mistress, that Helen added, “ Well, well, I will go, Louisa : ” and opening the door, she ran down stairs. But the house was quite empty ; there was the wooden clock ticking calmly in the passage, and shewing Helen she must have slept many hours ; but, for some time, that was the only moving thing she could see.

At length a sound of a murmuring tongue caught her ear, and in a closet scarcely big enough to hold her, Helen found

the old woman of the house on her knees before a crucifix, repeating prayer after prayer. She spoke but little French, and to all Helen's questions as to where she had better go, and what she had better do, the woman merely answered, "Stay where you are ; hide yourself where you can ! if you go out you wil' get killed or shot ; they are all round us, and will be fighting round us in a minute ;" and she began her prayers again with increased volubility. Helen returned to the room where she had left the maid, and there she too prayed ; but her prayers ascended not for herself alone, but for all that were about to take a part in that day's fearful strife.

In the meantime the battle did not seem to be proceeding with any great rapidity or vigour on either part ; the roar of the cannon and the roll of musketry only took place occasionally ; and Helen again approached the window in one of the intervals. All the troops which she had previously beheld had been habited in blue ; but, oh ! how her heart beat now, when, crowning the opposite slope, she saw several regiments in British uniform ! The next moment, however, her attention was called to another spot, for a sharp gallopping of horse was heard, and dashing into the courtyard came twelve or fourteen superior officers, headed by a strong, good-looking man, dressed as a French marshal, who instantly sprang to the ground, with several others, and entered the house. An instant after, steps were heard ascending the stairs ; and while Helen's heart was beating every moment with fresh terror, the door of the room was thrown open by the gentleman she had seen alight. He made a sudden pause of surprise when he beheld her ; but then recovering himself, he came forward saying, "Oh ! you are the young English lady of whom le Capitain Marc told me this morning ; but, my dear young lady, you are in a terribly dangerous situation here. You had really better go to the rear." While he thus spoke to her, however, Marshal Ney (for he it was) approached the window ; to reconnoitre the position of the Prince of Orange, which reconnaissance had been in fact the object of his coming, and gazing forth with a telescope in his hand, he interrupted his speech to Helen more than once, giving orders to those who had followed him : "Indeed you had better go to the rear," he added after a pause ; "do you know the way towards Frasne ?"

"Not in the least, sir," replied Helen, her heart sinking at the very idea of seeing her way through the French army at the begining of a battle.

"Those Belgians must be driven out of the wood at the point of the bayonet," said Ney, turning to one of his officers. "Order the seventeenth to clear the Bois de Bossu;" and then turning to Helen, he added, "If you do not know the way, my poor young lady, perhaps you had better stay where you are, after all. The enemy seem to have few guns with them, and if you can barricade that door, and keep away from the window, you may be safe enough.—When we have driven the English back upon Brussels, I will take care that you have the means of returning to your friends." So saying, he turned and left her, followed by his staff, many of the young aids-de-camp looking as if they would have had no small pleasure in conducting the fair English girl to the rear, had not imperious duty called them on another path.

When the marshal and his staff were gone, Helen lost no time in following the directions he had given; and after locking and bolting the door, she drew, with the assistance of the maid, such articles of furniture across it as they could move; and it is wonderful how terror will supply temporary strength to accomplish things, which, at another moment, would seem impossible. When all was completed, and she had seen a barrier raised across the door which certainly would have been very difficult to force, Helen sat down, and listened to the progress of the fight, which was by this time assuming a more decided character. She remained, too, as Marshal Ney had told her, as far from the window as possible, marking with an eager ear all the manifold sounds which told that the strife was no longer a mere skirmish, but a fierce and hard-contested battle. The roaring of the cannon on the French side was loud, and almost deafening, for a battery of field-pieces had been stationed on the slope close by the house; but still her ear rendered more acute by fear, could distinguish the charging of the horse, as well as the roll of the musketry, and even the word of command and shout of encouragement. She thought, too, that she could hear sometimes the shrill cry of agony, but, perhaps, imagination aided there: and, in truth, it was a moment—as she sat there alone, unprotected, helpless, in the midst of contending armies, listening to the

bloody strife—when imagination might call up a thousand painful images for the mind to dwell upon. Doubtless she did so furnish them to poor Helen Adair; and if she thought of her father, and of Charles Lacy, and pictured them mingled in the fearful fight around, or falling beneath the shot of the enemy, or dying slowly of their wounds upon the bloody field, it were not wonderful; nor if she wept, and wept most bitterly, would there be aught to surprise us. Helen Adair did weep, but, unfortunately, they were tears which afforded no relief.

It has often been a question amongst those men who call themselves moral philosophers, which of the passions—the many passions that alternately play their part on the stage of the human heart, is the most strong, pertinacious, and prevailing; and of course each gentleman has decided in favour of his own particular propensity. But there is one passion—for it is a passion—which they have all forgotten in their calculations, and which I maintain to be, without any exception, the strongest and most virulent of those our internal enemies—a passion which goes far beyond hatred and revenge, conquers fear, and I have a great idea has much to do with love—I mean curiosity. By it we learn every thing that we know, from the first moment to the last—for, certainly, we have but one other desire when we come into this world—which is, to suck; by it we are carried on from idea to idea, from study to study, from pleasure to pleasure—for every change, which is not put upon us by fate, is sought solely from the desire of trying a new state of being; and how much the same passion can conquer fear, was shown strikingly by the conduct of Helen's companion.

The poor girl, Louisa, was terrified almost out of her senses: the fears which her mistress entertained were dust in the balance compared with what she suffered. Helen's apprehensions for herself, indeed, were chequered by apprehensions for others; but Louisa's fears, all personal, and tremendously powerful, were still not sufficient to keep down curiosity. Ever and anon, for some minutes, she moved to and fro upon the sofa where she was sitting with her mistress; and then muttering something incoherent about "terror," and "liking to know her danger," she crept to the window, and exposing as little of her person as possible, gazed out upon the battle. Helen remained, with

her hands over her eyes, full of every painful apprehension, with her nerves shaken by all she had undergone, her whole frame trembling, and starting with renewed terror at every burst of artillery, notwithstanding their frequency.— At length, however, she was roused by Louisa exclaiming, “Oh, Miss Helen ! Miss Helen ! look here, do look here !” and, in a kind of desperation, she rose, and also approached the window. It was, indeed, an awful moment. A regiment of British infantry was marching across in front of the house, and on it was pouring down a strong cavalry force of lancers and cuirassiers. The ground was uneven, the corn was high, and, at the moment Helen reached the window, the British regiment was forming in square. The hurry, and difficulty of the ground, caused a company to be left out, and upon it the cavalry poured with overpowering force. A cloud of dust hid the whole for a moment ; but the next instant Helen beheld Ensign Williamson and about forty men rush across, and throw themselves into the garden of the very house in which she stood. It proved no refuge however ; the wall on two sides was low, on the other there was nothing but a wooden fence. A body of French grenadiers was pushed forward at that moment, and Helen beheld them surrounding the garden wall, which served them but as a breast-work, while with muskets levelled they prepared to pour a murderous cross-fire upon the unhappy men within. “Oh ! why do they not surrender ?” cried Helen, clasping her hands in agony ; but at that moment a bright flash, a cloud of smoke, and a ringing peal, ran round the garden ; and, overpowered at length, Helen sank fainting on the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

We must, ere we close this chapter, bring the story of all persons herein mentioned to one point, or as near about it as possible ; and therefore we shall now turn again to Mr. Adair, who, after leaving Charles Lacy on his way to Quatre-Bras, returned to Brussels, and, according to Lacy’s request, proceeded to the house of Lady Mary Denham as soon as the day was somewhat more advanced. He found Mary holding a *tete-a-tete* with one of the chief agents of

police,—for that lady had an instinctive apprehension of some mainspring breaking whenever my Aunt Pontypool was permitted to mingle with matters which required delicate management. Warned by a note from Lady Mary—which note also contained prospects of very liberal reward—the worthy agent had come prepared with all the information which he could collect at the moment, and having got over the preliminary *politesse*, he was just about to disburden himself of his tidings when Mr. Adair was announced. Lacy's account of his conversation with him on the preceding evening made Mary admit him willingly, and in his presence the agent went on to detail what he had done, making, of course, the most that he could of his own exertions. "In the first place, madam," he said, "I set inquiry on foot concerning all the greatest rascals of Brussels, who were likely to fall in the way of a stranger, and to render him service on such an occasion. In this respect, I have had the pleasure of finding that one of our most notorious swindlers prepared himself yesterday for a journey, hired a strong horse, and stole a cloak from a Jew salesman; and that a suit of livery, such as is worn by your domestics, *milady*, was ordered in haste at a tailor's, by an old gentleman living in the Rue — ; a fat old man, whom I have seen once or twice."

"Has he a red face, and small, sharp eyes?" demanded Mr. Adair.

"Precisely, precisely!" answered the shepherd of rogues and swindlers; "c'est un vrai Jean Bull!"

"Then the father is implicated as well as the son!" said Mr. Adair.

"I do not know any thing about the son," replied the agent of police; "all I have heard shows the old, fat man I have mentioned to be the person solely concerned. I understand that he was seen speaking twice with Jean Quatre Points, as the swindler I have mentioned is called amongst his companions—that he ordered the suit of livery himself, and—"

"I will go to his house and cudgel the breath out of his body this moment!" cried Henry Adair, snatching up his hat and gloves.

"You may save yourself the trouble," replied the agent of police, who well understood English, which was the language whereof Henry Adair had made use, it being the lan-

guage best fitted on earth to express indignation ; "you may save yourself the trouble, sir—for, in the first place I should expect you would find no truth in him ; and in the next, he left Brussels, or at least his lodgings in the Rue de — at ten o'clock last night."

"Just about the time that this infamous piece of insane knavery was practised !" exclaimed Henry Adair ; "it must be that old villain Williamson, though what can be his object, God only knows."

"With regard to his object, sir," replied the agent of police, "that is not our object. First let us find him, and then we will ask him his object. It seems to me that with the information which we possess, the only thing to be done is to ascertain the various *voituriers* whose horses are absent at the present moment, and then to discover which is the person he employed ; for there can be no doubt he would take post horses for such a business. Leave that matter to me, sir, and depend upon it, before night, you shall have farther, if not complete, information on the subject."

"Can the people of the house where he lodged afford you no information ?" demanded Lady Mary.

"They say, that from something he let drop," replied the agent, "they suspect he has taken the road to Namur ; but you see, milady, that is the very reason I should suppose he has gone in the opposite direction. A wily old fox like that would be sure to drop nothing but a false scent, as you say in England. However, you leave it to me—five hundred louis, you say ? Fichtre ! for that we would find the devil himself."

Thus saying, the agent of the police took his leave, and soon after Henry Adair did the same, begging permission to call again in the evening to hear what farther tidings had been received. "The happiness of my cousin Helen," he said, "is more to me, Lady Mary, than my own, and to contribute to her deliverance would be a consolation for all my future years, which all my future years are very sure to need."

Lady Mary said all that was kind as well as all that was polite, and Henry Adair departed ; but after spending an anxious and miserable day—for the excitement of seeking Helen had, while it lasted, somewhat withdrawn his thoughts from his own disappointment, which weighed

upon him doubly as soon as that excitement was over—he returned at night, only to find that no tidings had yet been received. In the meantime, Brussels had been in a state of great confusion and agitation. A severe cannonade had been heard proceeding from two different quarters, and the certainty of a battle having been fought gave rise to a thousand different rumours. Toward midnight, two or three carts filled with wounded were brought in, and the first tenants took their places in those hospitals which were soon to be crowded with fresh sufferers.

From these, however, no very satisfactory information was to be obtained, as they had been wounded early in the battle, and having been found capable of bearing the journey, they had been sent by the surgeons from a field where they could do no farther service. All they had to tell, therefore, was that the British and Belgian troops, few as they were, had maintained their position at Quatre-Bras, till they were carried off the field; and that fresh forces were arriving every moment. Nevertheless, there were not wanting many in Brussels to spread reports of the French success, nor many others to give willing credit to the tale. Some symptoms of disaffection were also exhibited, and that sort of movement and agitation was rife, which gave the police quite sufficient to do.

When, however, on the morning of the 17th, Henry Adair found that Lady Mary had not again seen the agent on whom they depended for information, he proceeded himself to the Bureau in search of him. The man acknowledged fairly that he had been so much occupied with other affairs, that he had not had time to devote to the object which they had in view; but he suggested, that if Henry Adair would inquire at the two first barriers on the roads towards Ghent, Mons, and Namur, he might obtain some tidings which might guide them in their after-search. Henry Adair was indefatigable, and immediately ordering his horse, he rode out upon the highway to Ghent, but no tidings could he obtain; and returning to Brussels, he dined with his father, to whom he related not only the fact of Helen's disappearance, but also his suspicions of the lawyer, and inquired if the peer could imagine any motive that could actuate Williamson in such a case. Lord Adair evaded the question, but he was evidently uneasy and alarmed, and, much to the surprise of his son, he was as eager that Henry

should proceed upon his search, as the other could be to do so. His dinner was despatched with unusual rapidity, and scarcely was the dessert put upon the table when he exclaimed—"Now, Henry—now, my dear boy—it is getting late; take my horse if your own be tired—but take care that you do not fall in with any parties of the French. They say that Wellington is certainly falling back."

"I will be very careful, sir," replied young Adair; "but do not make yourself uneasy if I do not return to-night, as, if I am late, I shall sleep at Hal. I shall take my servant with me."

"Take mine too," cried Lord Adair; "I shall not want him—I do not want a servant—I could do very well without one." But his son declined; and after he was gone, the peer walked up and down the room for a moment in great agitation. "I was sure," he muttered, "that villain was plotting something—I am afraid he has more in his head—I am very wretched—very unhappy—I wish to God it had never been done!"

While the father was thus lamenting over the adamantine, unchangeable past, the son rode on upon the road to Mons; inquiring as he went with a degree of accuracy and calm good sense, which could not have been anticipated from the usual reckless heedlessness of his character, into every particular which could throw light by any chance upon the facts of Helen's disappearance. It was not, nevertheless, till he had nearly reached the small town of Hal, that he obtained the slightest information which seemed to bear upon the subject of his inquiry. There, however, in speaking with the keeper of one of the tolls, the man looked up in his face with a smile—

"You are upon the wrong road, sir," he replied, in answer to his inquiries; "at least, if I am not mistaken. On the night of the 15th, about half-past eleven, I was over with my brother, who keeps the first barrier near the little village of Ixelles. There was a man on horseback stood near half an hour by the bar, and then came down the hill a carriage at full speed. At first we thought it was some of the generals going to join the army; but the horseman, as soon as he saw it, paid the toll for the carriage, and for two more horses besides, and then rode on after it as hard as he could go. As it went by, we saw in by the lamp; and there was one woman in it, if not two. There was a foot-

man behind, too ; and I have little doubt but that was the very carriage you are asking for."

Henry Adair doubted not either ; but fearful of his own hasty disposition, he asked several other questions, which only served to strengthen his conviction. " And now, my good friend," he said, giving the man a couple of louis for his pains, " that is for your information."

He was a respectable man, well enough to do in the world ; and if the pieces which issued from the young Englishman's purse, and then fell into his palm, had been made of silver instead of gold, he would certainly have been a very independent person, and have refused them at once ; but his eye had a fondness for yellow, and as the pieces were decidedly gold, though it was verging towards the hour of Hesperus, he dropped them into his pouch to be considered more at leisure.

" And now, my good friend," said Henry Adair, giving him the louis, " that is for your information ; but tell me farther as you seem to be a shrewd personage and well acquainted with these roads, what would you advise me to do in order to overtake these people ?"

" Why, a thousand to one, sir, you will not have to go far," replied the man. " The French are advancing on every side, we hear, and were doing so even on that night, so that it is scarcely possible they could get on without falling in with some of the French corps ; and if they did that, they would not get much farther."

" Why, how so ?" demanded Henry Adair. " The French would not injure or insult a lady surely ?"

" Oh, no, not that, my young gentleman," answered the barrier-keeper ; " but they might take a fancy to the carriage, and still more probably to the horses. I served long in the French army myself, and I know them. So if you will take my advice, as it is growing dark, you will sleep to-night somewhere here ; not at Hal, for that is as full as it can hold of your troops and officers already. But if you strike up that path, you will find a farm-house, where they will give you a good bed and a good supper—it belongs to my uncle : and then to-morrow morning, you can get a man to show you across to the Charleroi road—but keep behind your own posts, or you may fall in with the French ; and seeing an Englishman in plain clothes, may take you for a spy, and hang you without ceremony. On the Charleroi

road you will hear more, depend upon it ; but if you do not hear about Genappe or a little farther on, go back to Brussels, and inquire after a man called Pierre Duchesne, for I will swear they were his horses."

Henry Adair paused, looked at his watch, calculated, and finding that it was so late he could do little with the police that night if he even returned to Brussels at once, and that if he set out again by four the next morning, he might make a long round, and yet reach the capital early—he determined to follow the advice of the toll-keeper. He accordingly took the path the man pointed out ; found the farm, met with a civil reception, and the good supper which had been promised ; and was then shown to a chamber as clean as it is possible to conceive, with flooring off which one might have dined, if it had not been strewed with fine white sand.

There he cast off his clothes, ordered himself to be called at three, and lay down to rest ; but rest he got none, for the mind of poor Henry Adair was in a state of excitement from the struggle of many an emotion which set sleep at defiance. In the calm solitude of that small chamber, every agitating thought had space, and time, and opportunity to come upon him at once, and, showing him his own painful situation, to scorch as it were his very heart and brain with the intense light which they poured upon it. The mere agitation of having gained the first absolute and certain tidings of Helen Adair was enough to banish sleep from his eyelids, though the feeling of having done so was for a moment delightful ; but when reflection told him that it was not for himself that his hopes of regaining her were excited—that his efforts all tended to place her in the arms of a rival—he writhed under the thought. Yet, strange to say, he never even asked himself whether he should abandon the pursuit. To give Helen Adair happiness, might indeed be to inflict excess of pain upon his own heart ; but the reward was greater than the effort, and he hesitated not. The fiend which now held up the torch for him to contemplate the picture of his future misery, was foiled in that attempt to sully his heart ; but there might be found a weaker spot, and where is there a spot which the tempter will not try ?

Henry Adair next thought of Charles Lacy possessing that happiness which was refused to him ; and though,

linked together in the first eagerness of their apprehensions for Helen, he had felt sympathy even for his rival, he now thought of him with feelings approaching to hate. It is useless to deny it—for the moment, he did hate him !

But he felt that to do so was base, was ungenerous ; and he despised himself for having suffered such sensations to take possession of his heart. As he thus lay and thought, with his soul tossed to and fro between contending feelings, like a bark amidst the struggling waves, a sudden flash broke across the sky, and glaring round the chamber, showed for a single instant all that it contained, and then left it in darkness. Henry Adair sprang up, and went to the window, which was open. Of all who saw it, who but the dead have forgotten that night preceding the great battle ? —the rain, the lightning, the thunder !—but through that night there he stood, gazing forth upon the war of elements —with his mind sometimes finding, in the strife of heaven, associations with his own feelings, which made him once madly wish that the lightning might sear the eyes that gazed upon its blue and eager fire, so as to prevent them ever seeing the fair face they loved again—sometimes led away by imagination into the wild but sublime dreams which such a tempest as that may well call up for a fearless and fanciful being like himself.

Well, the night went by, and early on the following morning, though not so early as he had intended, Henry Adair set out, guided by a man whom he hired at the farmhouse. Two or three questions from the young Englishman were quite sufficient to make the peasant as communicative as could be wished ; and Henry Adair soon found that he was approaching the rear of the British army, drawn up for the purpose of battle. His heart yearned to ride on and view the coming strife : his mind was but too well in harmony with such a sight—but still he resisted, thinking that he would not give way to such a foolish inclination, but would pursue his search for Helen Adair even with the battle sounding in his ears. “ Let the mad insects fight on : ” he thought, “ I have nothing to do with their strife—let them fight on ! ” But still, notwithstanding all this, his heart yearned, as I have said, to join the rest, at least as a spectator ; and as he rode forward he listened with an eager ear for the sound of the first cannon.

Occasionally, as the morning advanced, and he proceeded

along the tortuous and somewhat tedious way from Hal to Waterloo, the report of musketry might be heard ; and twice he turned down the lanes to the right to gain a momentary sight of the English army. A general view, however, he could not obtain, though once or twice he fell in with a regiment on the extreme right ; and from one spot, where the ground sloped downwards, he beheld large, dark masses of cavalry and infantry hanging on the edge of the opposite heights. The space between the upland on which he stood, and that which was thus crowned, seemed very nearly vacant ; though, here and there, a small party of the British troops might be seen winding about in the ravines below. Henry Adair tore himself away from the sight, however, and hurried on, though the roads were so execrable from their soft nature and the heavy rain, that at every step his horse sunk fetlock-deep in mud. At length, after a fatiguing ride, he reached the village of Waterloo about ten o'clock ; and proceeding to the little inn, as the first means of winning an aubergiste's heart, he ordered all that could be had for breakfast. Every thing, however, was in confusion and disarray, both from the past and the future, as the English general had fixed his head-quarters at the inn on the preceding night, and as the approaching battle had terrified almost all the women from the village. Little, therefore, was to be procured at the auberge, except some eggs and wine for himself, and corn for his horses ; and as soon as Henry Adair began to question the inn-keeper, he found that even less information of the kind he wanted was to be obtained than provisions. The man's head was so full of the British army, the staff of the Duke of Wellington, and the battle—which he declared had already begun—that he could and would talk of nothing else ; and running hither and thither from one room of his house to another, he went cackling about, like a hen upon the high road before a carriage.

The eggs were as long in being boiled, as if they had ~~ever~~ to be made in the first instance ; and scarcely were ~~ever~~ upon the table when the dull, heavy roar of a single gun told that the battle had now begun indeed. It was ~~very~~ very near ; but the moment after a more distant ~~one~~ was heard, which was echoed again by British guns, Henry Adair could resist no longer.

Let the horses be brought out as soon as they have ~~ever~~ said ; and when, after about half an hour's delay,

they appeared before the door, he turned to his servant, saying, as he thought but just, "I am going to see the battle ; if you do not like it, you need not come with me."

"Oh yes, sir," replied the servant, "I should like to have alick at those Frenchmen too ;"—and master and man, putting their horses into a canter, were soon upon the field of battle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE two most exciting scenes on earth are a Spanish bullfight and a general battle. It is in vain that reason tells us, we are there to witness the most extravagant acts of human folly—to see the most extraordinary remnants of barbarism which are yet to be met with on earth. It is vain that humanity lifts her voice, and that common charity speaks of cruelty and ferocity, and appeals to our heart against deliberate bloodshed and wholesale murder ; still in the heart of man there is some principle which takes part with daring, and courage, and constancy, under every shape ; and we gaze upon the bullfight or the battle with a thousand fine and noble enthusiasms, excited in our minds by acts that are in themselves barbarous, cruel, and unreasonable.

Let those investigate the matter who can, and divine how and why such strange effects are produced in such strange ways, in our strange state of being ; at all events, such were the feelings which affected Henry Adair, as he stood on a little height, not very far to the right of the English centre, viewing the field of Waterloo about twelve o'clock on the 18th of June.

When first he rode up, there was a sort of cynical smile upon his handsome lip, as reason had yet liberty to talk to his heart about the scene he was going to witness, and to rebuke him for taking part or interest in acts which he condemned and affected to scorn ; so that the sneer was partly directed against himself, partly against those who were even then engaged in slaying each other. When he looked over the field too, and saw what it was—a few slight undulations of the ground, with a paved road and an orchard—he asked himself if it were not absolutely madlike and absurd for sixty thousand human beings to plant themselves on a ridge

of molehills to defend the way to another molehill, while a hundred thousand men, talking a different tongue, tried to force their way through, and both parties employed all their wit and dignity to throw large and small pellets at each others' heads, or to poke holes, or cut gashes in each others' carcases. Thus the smile darkened on his lip for a moment, as with a clear and marking eye he gazed over the battle which had not yet reached its height; but as he turned toward a small group of officers beside him, and saw one hard-featured man whom he instantly recognized as the commander-in-chief, looking with calm serenity of aspect over a field on which his honour, his fame, the safety of his native country, the destiny of a world, were at that moment cast—when he saw a cannon-ball plough up the earth beneath his horse's feet without causing a muscle to move in that calm stern face, he felt sensations beginning to rise in his heart which banished the cynical smile from his lip; and his eye naturally followed the eagle eye of the Duke, as he gazed upon the first struggle which was then taking place at Hougmont.

To the glance of Henry Adair, little was to be gathered from what he beheld. He could indeed see column after column of the French advancing against that particular spot, and he could well understand the importance of the post of the British army. He could see also flashes of flame and volumes of smoke issue forth from the contested point; but he could not at all divine which party were gaining the advantage of the other. Still, however, the interest in his breast was growing intense, and he could not but fear that the immense force of the French which was pouring down upon the small British advanced post would overwhelm the little knot of his countrymen, who, when the smoke for an instant cleared away, might be seen in the gardens and orchards of the chateau. At that moment, however, the Duke spoke a word to one of the officers near. The other galloped off, and the very next instant a battery on the right opened its fire upon the French column which was advancing upon Hougmont by the little cross road from La Belle Alliance to Merke Braine.

The Duke kept his eye for a moment fixed upon the column, the head of which was instantly thrown into confusion by the English fire. "Pretty service!" he said; "Very pretty service!" and turned his eye at once towards

the left, where the French battalions were beginning to be agitated, as if to commence a second attack there. Henry Adair rode up closer; and during the whole of the day continued as near to the General as he could get, certain of seeing there as much of the battle as it was possible for any one to behold. But even there to an inexperienced eye much was confused and unintelligible. Were the writer of this book a military man himself, he might give a better account of the whole affair: but, alack and a well a day! he can but tell the story as he finds it.

Henry Adair then, as we have said, saw nothing but column after column of the enemy advance against the British position—he saw the charging masses of cavalry hurled in fury against the squares, and recoil, dashed back like waves from off a rock. He saw the British heavy brigade mingle in deadly strife with the French cuirassiers, and he saw the imperial guard marching boldly on up the ravines of the left, and still as they reached a certain point fall man over man, swept down by the terrific fire of the English guns. It was like standing on the shore and seeing the waters of the ocean pour ever on towards one, but stop short at a fixed point, and never come beyond. Long before that period, however, every contemptuous feeling had left his breast, and all the sensations which naturally dwell in a bold and enthusiastic heart, interest, enthusiasm, anxiety, triumph, took possession of him by turns as he watched the progress of the fight. Step by step he advanced as the day went on, till he had insensibly become mingled with the staff of the Duke of Wellington; and in the course of the battle, as the shot flew about them thickly, and many of the aides-de-camp were carried off wounded, and many were despatched at once to different parts of the field, he found himself twice or thrice left totally alone with the commander-in-chief. He was slightly acquainted with him, but the Duke only spoke to him on two occasions; once when having no one else to send, he begged him to carry a message to a regiment near, and once when in the midst of the fight he exclaimed, “A gallant old fellow, ’pon my soul. That is a relation of yours, sir,—Colonel Adair with the —— regiment. See, they have brought their right shoulders forward, and are clearing the field!”

Henry Adair’s heart beat high as he marked the daring and skilful exploit of Helen’s father; and higher and higher

still as he beheld a strong body of French cavalry charge them as they advanced. But the regiment stood firm, and received the enemy with a murderous fire, that brought down horses and men rolling one over the other to the very points of the bayonets ; and turning with a feeling of pride to see what would be the feeling of the commander-in-chief, he perceived that the Duke had gone, and had thrown himself into a square upon the left.

It were endless, however, to tell—not all the events of the battle—but even all that Henry Adair himself beheld, and the emotions which were called up in his bosom by the sight. Three times he marked Lacy in the midst of the strife, and twice again he saw Colonel Adair with his hat off, and his white hair streaming in the wind, leading on his regiment wherever danger was to be met, or honour to be gained ; and at length when the French line was seen broken and shaken in every part, and the Duke himself led on the British to the last general decisive charge, Henry Adair could resist no longer, but putting his horse into a canter, rode on with the rest.

At that moment, for the first time during the day, the evening sun upon the very edge of the sky burst forth from the dark clouds that had hitherto covered it, and shone upon that fearful field of carnage. Magnificent, and terrible, and glorious, and sad was the sight, that the setting summer sun then looked upon at Waterloo. The whole line of British infantry, extending for nearly two miles, charging down the slope, supported by the cavalry and artillery ; the smoke and flame of the Prussian cannon hanging continually on the left, and on the right the heavy clouds tipped and mingled with the golden light of evening, while over the whole heights to the south might be seen confused masses of fugitives hastening from the lost battle, and the dead and dying covering thickly the space between.

At the town of Genappe, Henry Adair first drew his rein ; and here with a heart still beating, and feelings still agitated by the excitement of the scenes through which he had passed, he turned his horse's head back towards the field of battle. It was now night. The moon, full and splendid, was shining out as he reached the plain, and at first the scenes could appear more calm and tranquil than the field which had been so lately covered with strife, confusion, and death. The vanquished had fled, the victors had passed

on, the time was too short for the human vultures, who follow such scenes, to be yet very busy in stripping the fallen, and under the clear sweet light of the gentle moon, the dead and the dying were all that remained upon the field of battle. Occasionally, indeed, the sound of a distant cannon might be heard, or a faint roll of musketry, as the pursuers met with some temporary resistance ; but those sounds seemed but to render the silence of the field more potent and had not half the effect which was produced upon the mind of Henry Adair by the sudden baying of a watch dog, which sounded from a farm-house just behind the English position. At that moment feelings of triumph and enthusiasm were struggling in his breast with feelings of sorrow and gloom ; but the peaceful home-sound of "the watch dog's honest bark," in such a scene and at such a moment, with the dead and the dying around him, changed all his emotions into the tender and the solemn, and he could have paused to shed tears over the many broken ties and departed hopes to be buried on that sad plain. At that moment a low groan struck his ear as he rode along the paved part of the road, and looking a little to the left he saw the figure of a man struggling up from the ground apparently with much difficulty and pain. Dismounting from his horse he threw the rein to his servant, who had followed him closely through the whole day, and advanced to the person he had beheld. "Can I assist you, sir?" he asked, seeing the uniform of a British officer.

"Thank you, sir," replied the officer ; "I am wounded—badly I am afraid. It was just in that last charge—but I think if I could get upon the hard road I might reach the village and have my wounds dressed—for I have a wife, sir, and some young children."

"Will you take my horse?" said Henry Adair. "Do you think you can sit him?"

"I think I could, sir," replied the officer ; "but you are too kind ! There are others who may want it more than I."

"With that we have nothing to do now," replied the young man. "Take my arm to the road, and then make use of the horse till you get other assistance. My servant shall accompany and support you."

Thus saying, he led him on the road, and having placed him on the horse, gave orders to his servant to proceed with the wounded man, and return to join him at the inn at Wa-

~~same~~ as soon as he had seen his charge deposited in other ~~safe~~ hands. Then cutting short all thanks he made them proceed, and followed on foot.

"I know not why I should grieve myself," he thought, after he had proceeded some short way; "and I certainly can be of very little assistance to any one of all those who are lying in agony around: but yet I should like to see if there are many more left wounded on the field. They seem to have cleared this road of the living, for those who are lying round about me are motionless enough." He had now just reached the middle of the plain at the foot of Mont St. Jean; and quitting the road he wandered into the open fields towards Hougoumont. There was much corn standing on the ground, and though it had been beaten down in every direction, yet it still rose in tufts here and there, casting long shadows in the moonlight, and deceiving the eye, making it seem that the patches of dead were more numerous than they really were. But still they were numerous enough; and every two or three hundred yards came a spot where the slaughter had been more terrible, and where the corpses were thicker. An interest, a curiosity which he could not resist, caused Henry Adair, as he passed each group of dead, to gaze upon the faces that were exposed to the moonlight, and try to trace whether the cold features were at all familiar to his eye. As he got farther from the road he heard more groans, and approaching the spot from whence they proceeded, found a French cuirassier writhing on the ground beside his horse, which had fallen by another shot. The young Englishman endeavoured to raise him up, but even while he did so, the man's face became convulsed, and he sunk back to the ground quite dead. It was all so dreadful, that he determined to return to the road; but as he was in the act of executing this resolution, he heard voices speaking low, and one said, "Shall I give him a shot?"

"No, no!" replied the other. "See what he is about first. He does not seem to me to be plundering. He may be one of the surgeon's people."

"No, no; they have all got torches," replied the other voice. "I think I could hit him with my left hand."

"Is there any one wounded there, to whom I can bring assistance?" said Henry Adair, perceiving that he was the object of the conversation he overheard.

“Why that is behaving like a gentleman,” said one of the voices; and guided by it, he approached a little tuft of standing corn some ten yards from where he stood. But the voice cried aloud, “Stand off! stand off! and tell us first who you are, for you may be such another rascal as went by just now!”

“My name is Adair,” replied the young Englishman; “and my only object is to give you any help I can, my good friend.”

“Why, surely, it is young Mr. Adair,” cried the voice again. “Here is your cousin here, sir—your cousin, Colonel Adair. Here we are met together for the first time these two and twenty years; he, the son of my father’s old landlord, and I the son of his father’s old tenant at Brockley farm, lying together on the same field, and brought down, for aught I know, by the same shot—though that could not be either, Colonel, for you ~~came~~ down just as you were charging near me, and I had been there some ten minutes.”

“But are either of you much hurt?” cried Henry Adair, approaching and gazing down upon Colonel Adair and Adjutant Green as they lay together on the edge of a little dip of the ground, at the bottom of which were ten or twelve dead bodies.

“Why, no, I trust not,” replied the veteran looking up. “I have a ball through my leg which prevents me from standing, even for a moment; and this worthy gentleman, strange to say, is wounded precisely in the same way, but unfortunately has also got his right-hand disabled.”

“But I will go up to the village directly,” replied Henry Adair, “and bring assistance to carry you up to the surgeons. You may bleed to death.”

“Oh, no!” replied Green, “I’ve tied up the colonel’s leg so that it cannot bleed, and my blood stopped of itself long ago. No; if you will just take up that musket and cartouche-box, and stay with us till day breaks, you will do us a greater favour, for just before you came there was one of those vermin came by that plunder the dead, and they make very free with the wounded too. He put a bayonet into that poor fellow, who was not quite dead. We were too much alive for that; but if two or three of them were to come together as I’ve seen them in Spain, they’d cut our throats for the epaulettes, and what the Colonel has in his

pocket. So if you will just stay by us till morning, we shall do very well."

"That I will do with all my heart," replied Henry Adair, taking up and recharging the musket which Adjutant Green had pointed out, and then sitting down beside the two wounded men, he held out his hand to Colonel Adair, with that unfettered sincerity which always led him to say or do whatever his heart prompted at the moment. "Colonel Adair," he said, "I am happy to meet you. I have long wished to do so, but never had an opportunity of even seeing you till the Duke of Wellington pointed you out to me this morning, when you were charging across the field."

"Very kind of him so to notice me," replied the veteran, evidently flattered; "but to tell you the truth, my dear sir, I avoided the only occasion in which we were likely to meet, namely, when you were staying at the house of my attorney, Williamson, and expressed a desire to see me. My motive for so doing, young gentleman, was no personal ill-will either to yourself or your father, but simply because I had understood that the terms of the will under which you inherit a large portion of your property, strictly forbid your seeking ever to hold any communication with me."

"Those terms affect my father, sir, not me," replied Henry Adair; "and the only object which I had was to express how grieved I was that to enrich us more than was needful, you should be deprived of that which you had been taught to expect. Words I know are nothing; but should ever that fortune fall into my hands I shall certainly never make use of any part of it, holding that I have no right to do so."

"That will be a pity, sir! that will be a pity!" replied Colonel Adair. "I of course can never benefit by it. It is gone from me; and very justly. It was promised to me certainly by my grandfather; but I displeased him in the manner of my marriage, as you well know, and he had every right to change his mind, and leave it to whom he pleased."

"Nay, nay! I think not!" replied Henry Adair; "but perhaps that is what they would call one of my strange ~~memories~~. But I hold, sir, that every part of a man's moral ~~memories~~ are as much his property as the gold in his purse. ~~and~~ and of far more sterling worth than the glittering dross ~~memories~~ which he carries it, so that he who takes from ~~any~~ any part of his just happiness, robs him of more,

than the cut-purse who holds a pistol to his throat and demands his money. The one takes from him the substance of that whereof the other only takes a means. Thus, if we have once raised expectations in another which we do not fulfil, we commit a double crime. We lie in doing not the thing which we have promised to do, and we rob in taking away a hope and pleasures that we had created in the breast of another."

"I could smile," said Colonel Adair, "if the burning of this leg would let me, not in any contempt of such ideas, my dear sir, but at their novelty. However, I cannot agree with you in this instance. Such promises are always considered to be conditional by him who makes them, and ought, at least for his own peace, to be looked upon in the same light by him to whom they are made."

"Ay, sir, ay!" replied Henry Adair. "Such are the words I know whereby men salve over to their consciences the doing of great wrongs. Did your grandfather, when he made you a promise of that portion of his wealth which had been accumulated in India—did he bargain that you were to marry the first 'pretty painted piece of Eve's flesh' that he should choose for you? that you should tie yourself for life to an idiot or a shrew, to please his high wealthiness? or perhaps wed the soft and maudlin daughter of some rich city *house* because she was an heiress? or bind yourself to the bed of a French-instructed, *cicisbeo*-seeking dame, who had the long corrupted blood of fifty impure descents flowing in her titled veins? Or did he agree and covenant, that when you met the woman who had the power, either in her beauty or her worth, to move all the finer, and the nobler, and the sweeter feelings of your heart towards her, that you were to cast away the rich pearl you had found, because it did not please his fancy? No, no! He promised you that which he did not give; he excited expectations which he failed to fulfil; and—though others think differently, and Heaven forbid that I should say my father, thinking as he does, is acting wrong—yet I should as soon avail myself of one stiver of that wealth, as I would become a receiver of stolen goods."

"Hark!" cried Adjutant Green; "there are more guns!" and a few distant shots were heard breaking the stillness. The sounds of horses' feet too were distinguished echoing along over the causeway.

“ What are those lights moving about there along the side of the hill ? ” demanded Henry Adair.

“ Either the surgeons’ assistants, and people seeking the wounded,” replied Colonel Adair, “ or some of the same plundering villains as the one who lately passed,”

“ No, no, Colonel,” rejoined Green, “ they would trust to the moonlight ! Those are either some of the surgeon’s folk, or the people come out of the towns and villages to give what help they can, God bless them ! It has been a glorious day indeed, Colonel, as you were saying just before Mr. Adair came up, and we ought not to mind losing a good drop of our blood for a share in such a victory.”

“ Mind ! ” cried Colonel Adair ; “ sir, I am proud of every drop I have shed on such a field as this. The loss of a limb would not have been too high a purchase for the privilege of having fought here to-day.”

“ Nevertheless, my dear sir,” said Henry Adair, “ in order to ensure that you may not pay such a severe price for the pleasure already enjoyed, I had a great deal better go up to those good people with the lights, and bring some of them down to remove you to the village. You have here the musket to defend yourselves in case of annoyance, and I will be back directly.”

“ Not to the village ! not to the village ! ” said Colonel Adair ; “ it is full to the head already, depend upon it. If you could get some of them to bring down a bell-tent or two here, and send one of the surgeons, he might do a good deal of good, for about a hundred yards up the ravine there are five or six of my poor fellows who fell in that last charge, and of course we could not see whether they were wounded or not. We can lie here very well for the night amongst this good dry corn, and to-morrow we may get back to Brussels. My leg is very painful, I do not deny. A young man bears a wound better than an old one, I find.”

Henry Adair set out directly, taking care to mark the spot well, and every step that he took away from it also, in order to retrace his way back. As every one knows, the train of baggage which followed the Duke of Wellington’s armies was never considerable ; but Adair found each individual of the multitudes who were now assembled on the heights, so eager and willing to assist the wounded, that the Colonel’s wishes were no sooner expressed than attended to. Tents were instantly procured, and though it was impossible

to convey beds to the spot, yet several bear-skins and a quantity of straw were carried down to render the wounded men as comfortable as possible. About ten were collected within a hundred yards of the spot where Colonel Adair lay; but one poor fellow, who was removed to the same tent with that officer and Adjutant Green, died under the hands of the surgeon, who, by the Colonel's desire, was attending to his more severe wounds in the first instance. The medical officer then extracted the ball which had remained in Colonel Adair's leg, dressed the wounds of Adjutant Green, and, after giving them both hopes of speedy recovery, left them to the care of Henry Adair, and one of the peasants from the village, and hastened on to attend upon the rest. His strict injunction, however, was to keep as quiet as possible; and in about an hour, notwithstanding the pain of their wounds, both Colonel Adair and Adjutant Green, exhausted with loss of blood and severe fatigues, fell into a sound though somewhat disturbed sleep.

Henry Adair slept not, but watched beside them while the light of a lantern, which had been left, shone dimly round the tent, casting a faint and ghastly glare upon all the objects that it contained. Twice or thrice he looked out into the moonlight, and the feelings which took possession of his heart as he gazed over that gory plain, and as his mind rested on all that had just been, or wandered over all that was yet to be, are hardly to be told. The phantasms, conjured up by memory and imagination, on such a field as that, could be nothing but sad awful, and majestic.

Sometimes deep silence would seem to settle over the scene, as if the whole world, its sorrow and its strifes, were buried in the sleep that knows no waking. Then, again, some sight or some sound upon the plain—the clatter of the distant horses' feet, the report of a gun, or a brief blast of a trumpet, the roll of musketry afar off, or the boom of some distant cannon—things that were taking place through the whole of that night, would call his attention from the subject of his deep though dreamlike, meditations of war and enmity, and human folly, and the idle emptiness of ambition, or from the dark and bitter consciousness of personal disappointment, to the mighty events in which the fortunes, the hopes, the happiness of so many thousands were merged.

Still onward through the night rolled the beautiful moon,

till at length upon the eastern sky, across which were drawn some thin clouds appeared the first pale light of morning. Gradually it became brighter, rosier, more golden ; night waned into twilight ; twilight grew into day, and day in all its light disclosed broad and unveiled the ghastly horrors of that bloody field, corpse upon corpse, horses innumerable, one noble beast rolled over upon another ; broken arms ; dismounted cannon ; the corn beaten down, and twisted round the dead who had died in agony, its golden stalks dabbled with the red gore, and the very prints of the chargers' feet, in many places, filled up with little pools of blood.

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH the first light Colonel Adair was awake. "Is the Adjutant asleep still?" he asked, after having held a short conversation, in a low tone, with his young cousin.

"No, Colonel! no!" answered Adjutant Green. "I woke almost as soon as you began talking with Mr. Henry ; but I have had a good nap though—for which I was just thanking God, as well as for all his kindness towards us yesterday, which indeed, I think, has been extremely great."

"Great indeed, Mr. Green, great indeed!" replied Colonel Adair. "Great to our army, great to each of us individually, and great, I doubt not, to Europe in general."

"To be sure it was," rejoined the Adjutant ; to be sure it was ; and very grateful I am to him for having allowed me to have a share in such a victory and yet let me off with only two pitiful wounds, that will turn out flea-bites no doubt. Indeed, I dare say I ought to be grateful for them too, if I knew all. I always think, somehow, that God Almighty has an idea of doing us good in the very worst that befalls us—sometimes to our hearts and souls, you know, Colonel—sometimes to our bodies and fortunes—at least I always think so ; and I even fancy that we shall find, when we get to the other world, that death itself has come just at the right time."

"You are, there, a good Christian, Green," replied Colonel Adair, "and I doubt not a good metaphysician, for to my mind the one implies the other. But what would you infer?"

"Why, I was thinking, Colonel, even before this young gentleman came up last night," the honest soldier went on, "I was thinking that it was a very extraordinary thing that a ball should go through my boot and ankle into my horse and kill him dead, poor fellow, and tumble us both over just here, leaving me so that I could not get up; and then that ten minutes after up you should come, at the head of your men, and those French fellows of the Guard should just fire up the hollow way, and bring you down within ten yards of me, and neither of us much hurt either; and then that I should know you by your voice, as you called to your men to go on and drive them to the devil, and creep down to help you, and meet you here after so many years. I was thinking it was all very strange indeed, when suddenly something happens that makes it stranger still. Up comes this young gentleman, whom you never saw in your life before, but I have seen often—up he comes—and he's not in the service either—but up he comes, wandering about in the quiet-looking moonlight, over the place where we had been fighting hard all day, and he sits down with us, and begins to talk about the property of your grandfather—the East India fortune as we used to call it, and Brockley, and he explains it all as clearly as possible, and yet I cannot understand a word of it. So I think that it is evident that we did not thus fall in with each other without some object to be answered, and therefore, though it may seem very impertinent, gentlemen, I am resolved that I'll hear all about it, if you please, just to pass the time till the doctor comes round to us."

"I do not know how you mean all about it, Mr. Green," replied Henry Adair; "I dare say you know more about it than I do myself, as I remember your visiting my father at different times, and seeming to be well acquainted with the whole history of my family—I was very young when my father succeeded his grandfather, and all that I ever heard about the matter myself was in my early youth, though I have not forgotten it yet."

"Ay! I dare say I do know more about it," answered the Adjutant, "but still I should like to hear it all over again, for it seems to me that one or both of you gentlemen are under a mistake. And do not you forget, Mr. Henry, that I believe you to be as honest and free-hearted, ay and free-handed a young gentleman as ever crossed a horse;

that's all ! but still I think that there is some mistake, do you see ?"

" No, no, Green !" answereed Colonel Adair ; " there is no mistake in the matter. The story to which we were alluding is simply this ; my grandfather, after having accumulated a large fortune in India, returned to Europe on his elder brother's death, and succeeded to his title and estates. He had two children, my uncle, his eldest son, and my father. Both his children died before him, and as my grandfather at one time thought that the family estates were sufficient to keep up the dignity of the elder branch of the house, he promised to leave to me the fortune he had *made*, as it is called, in India. I offended him, however, in my marriage ; he would never see me after, and wrote to tell me that he had left the whole to my good cousin, now Lord Acur, with a proviso that he was never willingly to see me either. His will proved to be exactly in the same terms as his letter, and therefore—

" Ay, sir !" interrupted Green, " but what became of the will he made after ? of the last will of all, when he was dying ?"

" I never heard of such a will !" said Colonel Adair, in some surprise. " The will of which I speak was made nearly a year before his death."

" O yes, I know that," rejoined Green, " I know that as well as you do ; I was there when it was made, and heard all about it ; and so the other will has never been heard of, hasn't it ? Well, I did think mighty strange, and so did Newton, Captain Lacy's servant, when he talked over the matter. We talked about it only the other day in Brussels. But I'll tell you about it, Colonel, so listen ; and you listen, Mr. Adair, for I know more of it than any of you ; and you, who are a young high-spirited fellow, may have to do justice in the business yet. Well then, to begin—One night—no, but first I should tell you, that after my father failed in the farm at Brockley, near Stoke Norton, you know I, who was then but a young lad, and could write a good hand, was taken over to the Park to be clerk to the steward—but you know all that, Colonel.—Well, one night when my old lord was very ill and the steward was ill in bed too, I was had into his room—that is, my lord's—more than once to give some accounts ; and because the doctor said he was dying, and that there was no time for a Mr.

Snipe, who had been sent for, to come from London, this fellow Williamson, who was then a young lawyer just set up at Stoke Norton, was brought over to settle the old gentleman's affairs, for he liked very much to have every thing straight. Well, Mr. Adair, my lord your father was at the hall as well as Williamson; and after I had done all that I had to do, I was going away home about eleven o'clock, because I did not sleep in the house, when down came Williamson and bade me stop and come up with him, saying, that my lord wanted me to witness the signature of some papers. Well, up I went, and into my lord's room through the dressing-room—you remember the little dressing-room, Colonel, and how it used to smell of *marshal* powder—and there was my lord in bed, a sad sight to see was the old man—

“Was my father there?” demanded Henry Adair, with no small eagerness.

“No sir, no,” answered Green; “he was not in the room then. There was nobody but my old lord and the lad Willy Newton, who is now Captain Lacy's servant, and who used then to sit up with my lord o' nights, for all the other people were tired out: and when I came in my old lord said, ‘Read it over again, Mr. Williamson, I will have it read over again.’ So then Williamson told me and Newton to go into the other room; and though the old gentleman said, never mind, we might stay, and all that, Williamson put us out; but we thought it no harm to use our ears, —as my lord wished it. Well, he read the first part in a good loud voice, about its being the last will and testament of John Lord Adair, and a great deal more; but then he began to read low, and my lord bawled out to him to read louder, because he was very deaf, which was true enough; and so he was forced to read loud, and we heard all. Well, in that will, I am ready to take my oath, he revoked all other wills, and left the whole of the India property to you, Colonel, mentioning where the money lay and all about it; and when it was done we were called in, and I, and Willy Newton, and Williamson, all signed it as witnesses. Well, the matter passed off, my old lord died about three o'clock in the morning, and then my lord your father was very civil to me, and after the funeral he and Williamson set off in his carriage to prove the will, as they said, which had been ~~read~~ to some gentlemen in the parlour before; and I asked

Williamson too, as I met him in the hall, if I should go with them to prove the will, but he said there was no occasion, and I heard no more of the matter. The steward died not long after, and as I was his clerk and not belonging to the household, I was out of employment, and Williamson came and persuaded me to go into the army, telling me that if I did, and behaved well and distinguished myself in the service, my lord your father, Mr. Henry, would get me on, for his interest lay that way; and to speak truth so he has done, and has kept his word in that matter nobly."

"This is a very extraordinary story, Mr. Adair," said his veteran cousin; but Henry Adair was leaning forward with his elbow on his knee and his eyes buried in his hands, and he made no reply. Colonel Adair went on, "And pray, Green, when was it that any idea first struck you of the property not having come to me?"

"Why, not till three months ago," replied Green.—"You lived always in the country, sir,—I was always on duty—I was four years in the East Indies—a good many years in Spain, and when I did come to London, I found my Lord Adair not living as if he had any very enormous fortune either. So it was not till the other day almost, when we were in London, that Captain Lacy, who is the noblest hearted man, officer or private, now living, was very kind to my sister, and my sister's children; and I went to thank him by his permission, when who should I meet with in his servant but Willy Newton, who signed the will with me, and he it was told me that he had been to you that morning with a note from his master, who was a friend of yours; and he said to me, 'I'll tell you what, Mr. Green, there is something I don't understand here. If the Colonel has ever had that fortune he has spent it all; which seems to me a strange thing, for he was never an extravagant man.' So we both determined to watch how matters went, and speak out if needful. I afterwards heard more from your own daughter, Colonel, Miss Helen, at Ghent, where she and Lady Mary were very kind to me when I got hurt, but I never could make any thing out clearly till this very night."

"How strangely such events come round!" replied Colonel Adair, musing.

"Strangely enough, indeed!" answered Green, "and that was what I was saying, Colonel. I felt sure that yo

and I and young Mr. Henry here could not be brought together in such an unlikely place for no purpose ; and as for him—for Mr. Henry I mean—I have known him since he was a little boy, and I'll answer for it that he is one to see right done."

"As far as lies in my power," replied Henry Adair, suddenly looking up. "As far as lies in my power, so help me God. Colonel Adair, give me your hand, and forgive me my share of any injustice that may have been done to you. On my honour it has neither been with my knowledge or consent, and I believe on my soul that it has not been with my father's either. I speak not alone thus because he is a gentleman and I trust a man of honour, but I judge from events which have occurred concerning your own family, Colonel Adair, since you left Brussels, to which Mr. Green's story affords me the first clue, and which I think indicate that my father is totally ignorant of the villainy which has been practised."

"Concerning my own family, my dear young gentleman," said Colonel Adair, who felt much for his young cousin's painful situation, "I have but one child, sir, my daughter, whom I left certainly in Brussels; but I do not see how any thing can have occurred to her which affects this matter."

"Finding you here, sir, wounded and suffering," replied Henry, "I had determined not to mention what I now feel myself forced to speak of. I am very sorry to tell you that your daughter has been inveigled, under false pretences, into a carriage, and has been taken away from Brussels by some persons whose names we do not know." Forgetting his wound, Colonel Adair started off the bearskin on which he was lying, but instantly sunk back again with a low groan, and Henry Adair went on to give him what comfort he could. "Every means," he said, "are even now being used to discover where she is, but all that we have yet found out tends to prove that old villain—whose rascality I have long been convinced of—that old villain Williamson to be the culpable person in the business; and depend upon it his motive is some dark and villainous design regarding this very will, which it seems he has concealed. I, and Lacy also, first suspected the son; but it seems he is with his regiment, and the police of Brussels have satisfied themselves that the father is the person. I have obtained infor-

mation which leads me to believe that he has carried Miss Adair either to Namur or Paris, perhaps, from the position of the armies before the late battle, has been forced to return upon Brussels. I was myself engaged in the search, when I was tempted to look on upon the battle ; but the moment I see you safely on your road to Brussels I will renew my inquiries and depend upon it, will never abandon them till I have both discovered Miss Adair, and wrung from the very heart of that old scoundrel the truth concerning the will."

"O God, sir, cannot you go on now ?" cried the old officer in agony for his child ; but Henry Adair explained to him that it would be necessary for him to return to the village of Waterloo, in order to find his horses, and that it would be scarcely possible for him to proceed in advance of the army, which had not yet marched. Colonel Adair then asked a thousand questions, and received, more in detail than it may be necessary to give here, an account of all that had occurred in regard to Helen since the evening of the 15th. Thus passed about an hour, and after that the conversation sank into that sort of dreamy, conjectural, interrupted dialogue, in which the words that are spoken rather afford brief and broken glimpses of what is passing in the minds of the interlocutors than from a regular conference upon any one subject. At length the surgeon returned, a cart was procured, and the veteran, together with adjutant Green and the others who were not very severely wounded, were removed to the little town of Waterloo, where their wounds were again examined and dressed. As the village, however, was crowded with the more severely wounded, Colonel Adair and his companion determined to proceed at once to Brussels, and a tolerably convenient vehicle being procured, they departed for the capital about twelve o'clock. In the mean time, Henry Adair had found his servant and horses, and writing a hasty note to his father to assure him of his safety, he entrusted it to Adjutant Green, begging him to send it to the peer immediately on arriving in Brussels, while he himself proceeded with the search which had been interrupted by the battle of Waterloo. He at the same time charged Colonel Adair to take means to inform the police of the Belgian capital that the man named Pierre Duchesne was supposed to have furnished the horses to old William, and to desire that a messenger, with any information which might be elicited from that person, should be sent after him to Namur without loss of time.

CHAPTER IX.

THE seven league boots with which the literary Jack-the-Giant-Killers—called in the corrupt jargon of the present day romanciers—travel through the events of a tale they have to tell, have always been permitted to include time as well as space under their devouring stride, like the compasses we put upon the chart, and which embrace between their limbs not only countries and distances, but minutes and seconds. Taking this liberty therefore, though it be a very bold one for an experienced man to take, I will at once step to Paris, and stride over all that interval of time which lies between the 19th day of June 1815, and the 10th day of the month of July in the same memorable year. The French had fought first at Meudon, Issy, and various other places, and had bullied afterwards at Montmartre, Paris, and St. Cloud. Finding then that neither fighting nor bullying availed them ought against the gentlemanly sternness of Wellington, and the blunt determination of Blucher, they had truckled to the great compeller of reluctant man, Necessity—and, as a Frenchman ever truckles with a good grace, had shouted and huzzaed into Paris the king they had abused six months before, and whom they called nothing but *gros cochon* three days afterwards. The whole capital was in a ferment of joy on the entrance of Louis, and its deliverance from the fear of foreign bayonets; and as changes of sensation generally rush into extremes, those who had been flaming in wrath over the defeat of Waterloo, who had found out with General Drouet that the English had won the battle merely by timidity, and who had declared they would shed the last drop of their blood in defence of Paris, were now aping the dress and manners of the adversaries they affected to laugh at, and making the streets ring with palinodies, not unaptly rendered by Beranger in the words “*Vivent nos amis, nos amis les ennemis.*”

It was just in the cream of the effervesce when the carbonate of soda of the convention had neutralized the acid of apprehension in the minds of the Parisians, and the King had been added as a lump of sugar to sweeten the beverage, that Henry Adair, in walking along the Rue de la Paix, to-

wards ten o'clock at night, which was within half an hour after his arrival in the capital, suddenly confronted no other a person than Ensign John Williamson, who instantly held out his hand to him. Now Henry Adair, who the reader will immediately perceive is the hero of this book, whatever he may have previously imagined, had a great notion of limiting his affections to their own immediate sphere, and never suffering them to run one into another. Thus when he loved a man, woman, or child, he took especial care that his love did not degenerate into a passion for all the relations, friends, connections, and acquaintances of the beloved object, and when he hated any man mortally, he did not take the pains also of hating his whole generation. He thought the maxim which every rich old woman, with a snapish, snarling, pet cur, impresses upon the minds of all aspirants to her good things hereafter, namely, "Love me, love my dog," a very foolish maxim indeed; and, wishing to view, think of, and feel towards every thing animate and inanimate, according to its own proper merits, he attempted, as much as possible, Mr. Philips, to deprive every thing he looked at of the reflex colours, which, as you justly observe in your lectures, they all acquire by their proximity to other objects. By this time, then, he had become fully and thoroughly convinced that Mr. Williamson, sen. attorney-at-law, was wholly and solely culpable in the matter of Helen Adair's disappearance, and as he had heard from various officers with whom he had associated during the march of the army upon Paris, which march he had closely followed, that Ensign John Williamson had been with his regiment at Nivelles on the notable fifteenth of June, and had marched with it upon Quatre Bras on the sixteenth, he exculpated him in his free and generous thoughts from all share in the offence of his father, and shook him heartily by the hand as an old acquaintance. The light of an illuminated window, which had been sufficient to enable the two young men to recognise each other, was not strong enough to display to them that they were both worn and haggard: but the voice of young Williamson, as he greeted Henry Adair, evinced at all events that he was agitated.

"I am very glad indeed to see you, Adair," he said; "do come with me, I am lodging here at the corner. If you had not come, I do not know what I should have done."

"Lodging here at the corner!" said Adair, "why I

thought your regiment was at Argenteuil ; I was going there to seek you to-morrow : I wished to ask you if you could give me any news of your father, as I want to see him."

" He is not here," replied the other ; " but I will tell you more about him to-morrow. I was taken prisoner at Quatre Bras, and am now only upon parole ; but the matter is this—I have got into a quarrel here about a lady—I have been horsewhipped in the street, and am to fight to-morrow. Will you be my second, for all the officers, I know, are too far off to be found in such a hurry ? I have named five o'clock, and the place, Montmartre, just behind where the French were in position. Will you consent ? Do, my dear fellow, for old acquaintance sake. I am sure I shall be killed, but that does not signify. Do go with me."

" Why, Williamson," replied the other, " you know very well that such a thing is quite contrary to all my principles. I would laugh the man to scorn who asked me to do such a stupid thing as to fight him ; but I suppose you as a soldier must do it ; and I as your old school-fellow must not refuse to go with you. But tell me one thing first. You say it is about a woman—now if you have seduced her, married or single, I will have nothing to do with the business.

" No, no !" replied the other, " on my word, on my honour, it is nothing of the kind. But here is my hotel, will you come in and talk to me about it ? I know I shall be killed—but that does not signify ; I will shoot him too, or know the reason why."

" I cannot come in with you at present," replied Henry Adair ; " but if you will take my advice, Williamson, you will go home yourself, and think over the whole business. If you are in the wrong, do not fire at your opponent. If you think you will be killed—which of course you can know nothing about—prepare yourself for death both as a brave man and a Christian. Death has nothing terrible in it but the name, Williamson. It is but the cessation of one state of being—nothing more."

" Oh ! I know all that," replied the other, impatiently, " and I do not fear death more than any other man. I showed that, at Quatre Bras, I think—but do come in and talk to me about it."

" I cannot at this moment," replied Henry Adair, " because I wrote a note this morning to beg a friend of mine to call upon me at my hotel at a quarter past ten. If you

would like me to come after he is gone—if I can give you any comfort, or any support, I will certainly return in an hour, or an hour and a half."

"O d—n it, no!" replied the other, "I don't want comfort or support! I shall go to bed and sleep, so that my hand may be steady to-morrow morning. I have ordered the cabriolet at half-past four, so do not be later, pray. You see the house—Number 104, au premier—but my servant shall be at the door—good night. I must write one letter."

Thus saying, he entered the house, and Henry Adair muttering to himself no very pleasant comment on the character of his school companion, returned to the inn where he had taken up his abode, and where a letter and a note were put into his hands. The letter was from his father, written evidently with an unsteady hand, and under great agitation of some kind; but it only contained two matters of importance, which were, first the information that tidings had been obtained by the police of old Mr. Williamson having certainly gone back to England, though by a circuitous route; and secondly, an injunction of the most pressing nature for Henry Adair to follow him, and by any means get Miss Adair out of his hands. A few words, however, with which the old Lord ended his letter, struck his son more than all the rest. They were, "that man wishes to sell me, I am sure."

"Sell me?" exclaimed Henry Adair. "Sell me? can it be possible?" And after gazing at the letter for a moment or two longer with a vacant eye, he dashed it down upon the table, and opened the note which had been given to him at the same time. It began:—

"**MY DEAR ADAIR,**

"I am sorry to say that business will not admit of my meeting you to-night in Paris as you wish; but if nothing occurs to prevent me from fulfilling my present intentions, I will call upon you to-morrow at one o'clock.

"*Your's, ever,*

"**CHARLES LACY.**"

Henry Adair's mind instantly reverted to the other letter, and after murmuring more than once, "Sell me? sell me?" he sat down, and covering his eyes with his hands, remained in that position for more than an hour. Then rising, he

rang for his servant, ordered him to call at four the following morning, and then cast himself but half undressed upon his bed. It needed no one, however, to rouse Henry Adair on the following morning, for sleep had never visited his eyelids, and towards three o'clock, finding the effort to obtain any thing like slumber utterly vain, he rose, lighted a lamp, and dressed himself. By a quarter past four he was walking along towards the Rue de la Paix, with a heart sadly condemning the deed in which he was going to participate, and ere he reached the door of his former school-fellow's abode, a hired cabriolet, with a prancing horse and foreign servant, dashed up to it. Walking in—for the door was by this time open—he went up to the first floor, where he found a servant, who showed him the rooms of the person he sought; and in a moment after he was in the presence of the young officer, whom he found leaning with his head upon his hand, and no slight traces of anxiety—perhaps we might say anguish—apparent on a countenance, which, as it was never intended for the expression of any strong passion, seemed the more fearfully changed by that which now agitated it.

"I have been waiting for you, Adair," he said, starting up from his reverie as the other entered. "Come along! let us be the first on the ground, at all events! Was the cabriolet at the door?"

Henry Adair answered in the affirmative, and the other without any more words moved towards the staircase; but when he reached the further side of the room he paused, and gave an anxious look round it, as if numbering the different objects it contained—it might be that he felt, it was perhaps the last time he should ever see any of them. However, he walked on the next moment, and using no ceremony with his second, he went down stairs before him, and approached the cabriolet. The servant was holding the horse's head, and saying, "You drive, Adair! I must keep my hand steady," young Williamson put his foot upon the step, and was getting in; but suddenly turning round to his servant, he exclaimed, "What the devil do you mean by putting the pistol-case on the seat? Who can sit there? Put it down underneath!"

The man sprang forward to obey, leaving the horse's head free. It—a fiery, high spirited animal—darted forward at full speed with the young Englishman, half in half

out of the cabriolet. Henry Adair rushed up to stop it, but in vain. Williamson himself twice tried to catch the reins; but just as he was succeeding, the horse, sweeping like lightning round the next corner, dashed the wheel against the house. The cabriolet bounded off with a whirl, and at once the unhappy young man was pitched forward on his head. His feet were entangled in the reins, the horse set his hind hoof upon his chest, the cabriolet went over him, and had not the buckle luckily given way, he must have been dragged on through several streets, along which the horse ran in fury ere he could be stopped.

Henry Adair, the servants, and one or two lookers on instantly ran up, but the unhappy youth's face and head were dreadfully cut, and covered with blood. The trace of the horse's hoof was left in mud and gore upon his chest, and he gave no sign of life whatever except by twice feebly lifting his hand with a sort of tremulous, convulsive motion. No time was lost ere a surgeon was sought, and one of the servants ran across the streets to the house of good old Monsieur de C——x, while the rest of the persons assembled carried Williamson up to his own chamber, and laid him on his bed.

The old surgeon came at once with nothing but his dressing-gown cast over his night clothes, and instantly examined the head of the unhappy young man, observing with satisfaction that he did not think there was any fracture of the scull; but when he came to open the bosom of his shirt, he shook his head with a grave look, saying,

“ The sternum is dashed in as if with a cannon ball; yet the pulse is to be felt, though but little; give me a sponge and some vinegar;” and he proceeded to wash the blood and dirt off the patient's face and head. The cold water revived him instantly, and he opened his eyes, gazing wildly and vacantly over the party by which he was surrounded. Then suddenly with a faint motion, he beckoned to Henry Adair, after endeavouring in vain to speak. Henry Adair bent down his head, and, after one or two efforts, heard him pronounce, “ Montmartre!—go;—go!—Tell them all this!” He understood what Williamson meant at once; but he still lingered for a moment till an impatient look from the other showed him that he did more harm by staying than any assistance he could give would compensate, and

telling the old sergeant to remain with his patient until his return, he hurried away.

Calling one of the *fiacres* which were now beginning to congregate in the streets, he ordered the coachman to drive as fast as possible to Montmartre, and having, on their first ill-starred expedition, set out with Williamson somewhat before the necessary time, he reached the heights only a few minutes after that appointed for the meeting. He knew not the exact spot, however, nor the persons he was to seek ; but seeing, as he passed the little *guinguette* at the top, a group of three gentlemen standing idly in an open space at some distance, he walked up towards them. As he came near the figure of one of them struck him as familiar to his eye, and the next moment the gentleman turning round showed him the features of Charles Lacy. For a minute he doubted whether he had fallen upon the right party, but giving a glance to the others of whom the group was composed, he saw the well-known figure of a regimental surgeon, and lying hard by the open pistol-case with the mallet and other means of cramming those fatal and detestable instruments.

"Why, Adair !" cried Lacy, advancing, and shaking him by the hand, "what have you come hither for ? We are likely to have some serious business here, if an acquaintance of mine does not disappoint me."

"If you mean young Williamson," replied Henry Adair, "he certainly will disappoint you."

Lacy's lip curled. "I did not know," he said, "that he was coward as well as scoundrel."

"No, no ! you do him wrong," said Henry Adair, "he cannot come, though he had every wish to give you the meeting here ;" and in few words he rendered Lacy and the other two gentlemen, who by this time had come round, a brief account of the accident which had befallen young Williamson and its consequences.

Lacy heard him in silence, but his was not a heart to listen unmoved to the sufferings of a fellow-creature, even though his hand but the moment before had been armed to meet the same being in deadly conflict. He did not choose to express his feelings, indeed, and heard the tale, as far as it concerned the lawyer's son, without reply ; but the look of pain and distress which crossed his countenance when the state in which the unhappy young man had been taken

up was detailed, gave a sufficient indication of his sensations.

"Well," he said, turning to the two gentlemen whom Adair had found with him, "well, I have only to thank you, gentlemen, for your company thus far, and for your good wishes. I do not deny that I am very glad the punishing of a scoundrel has been taken out of my hands, for it certainly is not a task I covet. But tell me, Adair, how comes it that you, whom I left with such very opposite feelings, should now be acting as second to this fellow in such a business as this?"

"I have no idea what the business is," replied Henry Adair, "or at least had none till I saw you here, which makes me suppose that it has some reference to my cousin, Miss Adair. I only met Williamson last night, and he asked me to be his second, but I never thought of enquiring either who was his opponent or what was the subject of quarrel."

"My dear Adair, you really should be more careful," replied Lacy; and then turning to his companions, he said, "Gentlemen, if you will return in the carriage I will rejoin you in an hour or two, and in the mean time, Colonel, do try whether it will not be possible to get me leave of absence for a month. I know it will be very difficult to manage, but if the Duke is informed of all the circumstances I think he will consent, now that all the serious fighting is over,"

"We must get him to give you despatches," replied the other, "that is the only way depend upon it. He will give us no leaves of absence with sixty thousand men before him."

"Well, well, the despatches will do as well, since London is my object," replied Lacy. "But now I will bid you good bye, and walk down the hill with my young friend here." Thus speaking, he put his arm through that of Henry Adair, and proceeded a little way in silence: but at length he said, "So, you did not know what was the cause of the quarrel between me and this young Williamson. Why I told you, before I quitted Brussels, that I strongly suspected him of being the person who had so daringly and shamefully carried your cousin, Miss Adair, away, and feeling towards her as I do, and placed towards her in the situation in which I am placed, you might easily imagine that my first act, on seeing him, would be to horsewhip him soundly."

"True!" replied Henry Adair, "such was the conduct which I might expect, under those circumstances, from one of you men of the world, Lacy; but I had forgot that you might not know what I have learned since I saw you, namely, that this young man is not the person in fault, but rather his father, whom I believe to be the greatest villain living. He would cheat my own father, I believe, if such a thing were possible; but, as I was saying, it was he who carried off Helen, and not his son. I have proof both of the act and the motive, which I can give you."

Lacy shook his head doubtfully, but the sign was addressed more to himself than to Henry Adair; for though Charles Lacy was a man of as strong feelings as any one, and subject to as rapid changes of sensations, yet he had them under some command, and never suffered them, except on rare occasions, to cut short a story of which he had only heard the beginning. He therefore listened attentively while Henry Adair proceeded, with his usual straightforward uncompromising candour, to tell not only what he had learned at Hal, and what he had heard from the agent of police at Brussels, but also the whole story which had been told him by Adjutant Green on the field of battle, together with the confirmation of the suspicions against old Williamson, which his father's last letter implied.

He had but one concealment in the whole, which was, that he did not mention the words which, in reading that letter, had made such an impression on his own mind, "That man wishes to sell me!" In fact, he had partly reasoned himself into believing that they meant nothing. The generosity of his own heart would not let him believe it possible that any consideration could induce his father to benefit by the spoils of another, and that other a relation—the very candour and straightforwardness of his whole mind made him reject as impossible the idea that his parent could be any sharer in the dark and tortuous schemes in which it seemed the lawyer had involved himself. In short, he was resolved not to believe, and in that resolution he skipped over every evidence which would otherwise have been convincing, and swallowed improbabilities that otherwise would have been fatal to his preconceived belief. He forgot in the wilfulness of filial affection, that his father was the person who benefitted by the act whose culpability he laid upon another, and that that other person had but small apparent

interest in the deceit. This being the case, by a natural process of the mind, he took the same means, without knowing it, of deceiving Lacy that he used to deceive himself, and passing in general terms over much which might implicate his father, he told the story against Williamson boldly and at once. It is but fair to say, however, that had he been convinced his father was really guilty also, he would have told the same story with as great or greater frankness, for it was only the consequences of having deceived himself that impaired his sincerity towards others.

Lacy, on the contrary, was not to be deceived, but he perfectly understood the nature of Henry Adair's mind—he had a sort of intuitive perception of his feelings and motives ; for, to say the truth, his own were very similar, and were only varied by the possession of greater calmness—perhaps acquired by education—and stronger controlling powers of mind. He therefore perceived that Henry Adair's affection stood up as a shield before his father, and turned aside every arrow that reason directed against him ; but Lacy also saw at once that John Williamson, attorney-at-law, would never, without the knowledge and consent of Lord Adair, commit an act of deep turpitude by which Lord Adair was to be the only person benefited. This conviction of course he did not express, and indeed his feelings run stronger in another direction at the moment, for though the question of the property might affect his own hopes in regard to Helen at an after period, by influencing Lord Methwyn's opinions respecting the alliance, yet his first anxiety was for her present situation, and he replied to Henry Adair's assurance, that the lawyer was the only person to blame, by saying, "Indeed, my dear Adair, you are mistaken. Though the account you give is very extraordinary, and the appearances against the old scoundrel are very strong, yet I have proof positive against the son. A party of the young guard, under a Captain Marc—*chef de bataillon*, in fact—surrendered to me after the battle of Waterloo, and wishing to show him any kindness I could, I made him sup with me—which he did very heartily. He was quite full of two things ; the late battle of course first, and then a little romance, which he told me had happened at Quatre Bras. A young lady in a carriage, he said, with four male attendants, and a female one, had fallen in with

one of their advanced posts, on the night of the fifteenth. He commanded the post, which was strong, and on inquiry found that the young lady—who was as beautiful as the day, he said—no other in fact than Helen herself—had been carried away from Brussels against her will. He had instantly put the people who had done so under arrest, they declaring however that they acted under the orders of a Monsieur Williamson, and he had then given her and her maid an apartment in the house where he had taken up his quarters—”

“ But how are you sure that this Monsieur Williamson was not the father ? ” demanded Henry Adair.

“ You shall hear,” replied Lacy. “ The next day the battle began before the young lady was up, and he had the good fortune he said to capture in the very gardens of that house into which they had thrown themselves, being left out of the square—part of a company of the —— regiment. Only one young officer was left alive, and on demanding his name, he replied, Williamson. ‘ *Et voila l'auteur de l'enlèvement !* ’ cried my prisoner. He instantly accused young Williamson of the fact, it seems,” continued Lacy, “ when what do you think the scoundrel had the impudence to say ? He declared that Helen was his wife, that she had left him on some foolish quarrel, and that he had had her carried off to get her away from her relations, who set her against him. He had the impudence to ask, and they had the folly to promise, that she should be sent on to Calais, where the young scoundrel said some of his own family would meet or send for her, in case of the war being protracted. My informant, however, could tell me nothing more, except that the prisoners had been marched for Paris by the way of Mons, in order of course to bolster up Napoleon’s pretended victories, with which he deceived the poor Parisians. He believed, Captain Marc said, that the lady had been sent on to Mons too, at her husband’s desire ; but he could not exactly tell, as he had himself been ordered to march immediately, and all he could do was to recommend the whole party to the care of one of Ney’s etat-major. As soon as I could, I got into Paris, and sought the young scoundrel through the whole of yesterday, but it was not till three o’clock that I found him, and then, after having tried in vain to make him tell where Miss Adair is to be found, I horsewhipped him half-way through the Palair

Royale. The result of all this you know, and I feel sure that you look upon his conduct as I do ; but still I think you had better not abandon the unhappy young man in his present state, for from what I hear he has no friends here, and his own regiment, in which of course he has some intimate acquaintances, is at a distance. I, of course, cannot take any notice of him, and besides, I am anxious to get back to London, passing through Calais. Colonel Adair is better, and is going, if not gone back to London, but my poor friend Kennedy is dead, or dying, of his wounds in Brussels, so that I have no one to aid me in my search, or supply my place."

"I wish that I could do either for you," replied Henry Adair, "but as you say, I must not abandon this unhappy young man. Perhaps even the terrible accident he has met with, and the near approach of death, which I am afraid is inevitable, may show him his folly and his wickedness, and make him do something to repair the wrong he has done. I will leave no persuasion untried ; and in the meantime do not fail to let me know all your movements."

Lacy promised to comply, and having walked to the door of the hotel where Ensign John Williamson lay, and ascertained that he was somewhat relieved and quite sensible, he left Henry Adair to the performance of the task he had taken upon himself, and returned to his regiment.

CHAPTER X.

WE will not dwell upon the many painful and fearful sights which the streets of Brussels presented during the two first days which succeeded the battle of Waterloo : they have been well chronicled elsewhere ; and as it is only with what was passing in one solitary house in the midst of that fine city that we have to do, so to that one house shall we limit the footsteps of our pen, if we may use such a new figure towards the little creature, who having certainly far more to do with wings than feet, has generally amongst the flowers of rhetoric confined itself to flights.— Even on the sixteenth, for the wind was southerly, the distant roar of the cannon had been heard in Brussels, and the knowledge that a struggle was taking place, on which the

fate of Europe depended, kept every one, throughout the Belgian capital, in breathless expectation. The victory of Quatre Bras raised hope high in the minds of those who felt an interest in the success of the Allies, but then, rumours of the defeat of Ligny, and tidings that Wellington had fallen back, spread consternation, and the anticipation of disaster. Then came the still more eventful day of Waterloo, and during the whole of that terrible morning, Mary Denham sat without occupation, listening to the cannon, and feeling, for the first time in life, what a mighty and overpowering thing is love. She would have given worlds to be alone ; but still, for worlds, she would not have so far wounded the feelings of my good aunt Pontypool, as to tell her, that there are circumstances, in which the very best devised consolations are but aggravations of pain, and that the efforts of others to support our hopes, are very often the means of casting them down. Unfortunately, however, it so happened, that the consolations of Lady Pontypool were not always precisely the best devised. On the contrary, as her imagination was very fertile in horrible images, she thought that the best way of soothing another, would be to explain the reasoning whereby she combated her own apprehensions ; forgetting, that at the same time she communicated to the mind of her hearer, which might otherwise be without them, all the painful ideas which she herself conjured up.

Thus, during the whole time the battle lasted, she contrived, with the kindest intentions in the world, to raise, arrange, classify, and lay before, poor Lady Mary, every thing painful, terrible, and distressing, which could by any chance occur, in consequence of the great struggle even then going on, from the death of Charles Lacy, Major Kennedy, and Colonel Adair, in one group, to the ultimate conclusion of Brussels being taken by storm, and all its inhabitants put to the sword. It is true, that she did add her reasons for hoping such things would not occur, but still she reminded Lady Mary that they were probable, and with alarming accuracy, left not one possible danger or sorrow out of the list of miseries which she placed before her niece for approval. News from the battle of course poured in during its continuance, and rumour added and improved as much as might be ; at the same time the intensity of the interest excited broke down conventional reverence, and when

ever anything important was learnt, some of the servants, unbidden, would appear to communicate it to the two ladies.

At length, towards eleven o'clock at night, the joyful tidings of a great victory—a great, a signal, a final overthrow of the enemy—reached Lady Mary, and gave hope fresh ground to build upon. But still, love and fear were but too close allies, and though Mary Denham lay down to rest, yet sleep visited not her eyes, and, early the next morning, she was up and dressed.

Her mind was now upon the wounded, and as she entered the breakfast room she said to the butler, who was busily engaged in preparing for the meal, “I wish, Harrison, that you would go with all the servants but one, and see if you can give any help to the wounded. There are five or six rooms unoccupied in this large house, and I am afraid the hospitals will be very full. You may bring any of the wounded here that you think fit; and do, Harrison, inquire if all our friends are safe, my cousin Charles, and Colonel Adair, and—and—Sir Thomas Picton, and Major Kennedy.”

“I will go immediately, I have brought the water, my lady,” replied the butler; “the groom and coachman say, that when they were out exercising the horses, they saw carts after carts of wounded coming in. But it's certain, my lady, that Bonyparty will never be able to hold up his head again. Some say, indeed, that he's taken.”

In about an hour the butler returned with a note, directed in pencil, which came, he said, from Captain Lacy. It contained but few words :

“DEAR MARY,

“We have gained a great victory, but at a dreadful sacrifice. I am afraid Colonel Adair is killed; I saw his regiment without him, in the end of the day. He behaved like a hero. Picton is dead. I am unhurt, and Kennedy is living, but nerve your heart well, my dear Mary, for he is wounded seriously; but still I have hopes may do well: the surgeons say that he has no mortal wound, though many. Perhaps, if you think there be no impropriety, he might be more comfortable in your house than an hospital.

“Your's very affectionately,

“CHARLES LACY.

"P. S. I have obtained information which may, I trust, lead me speedily to the discovery of our dear Helen, and to her recovery from the hands of the villain who has had the daring impudence to carry her off in so scandalous a manner."

The paper dropped from Mary Denham's hand, as she felt that the fate she had dreaded had overtaken her. She, who had fancied at one time that she should never feel what love is, who had believed her own heart cold and insensible, had been taught, at length, to feel with that deep intensity of affection, that hearts, easily moved, seldom, if ever, know; and now, her beloved, her chosen, was the one to be selected by misfortune, to fall in the last fight of all the many he had seen, when the happiness of their mutual love was but a few weeks old to either of them. Mary Denham did not faint, nor shed tears, nor give any of the accustomed signs of grief, such as the world in general expects from people who sorrow; but she let the paper drop, and gazed on upon vacancy, while the mental eye took a survey of all that was sad, and dark, and bitter, in the present and the future. Calmly—sternly, I might say—she stood; and, as the first impulse of sorrowful thought is always selfish, she fancied herself the most miserable being, at that moment in existence. The next instant, however, she remembered Helen Adair; and that thought led back her mind to all its native generosity of feeling. There were others, she now felt, miserable in the world besides herself; and she was soon brought to comprehend that there might be others, too, far more miserable—others, whose minds as well fitted for deep feeling as her own, might have to bear up under accumulated sorrows, produced by that same battle, to which her own were dust in the balance indeed—who might at once have lost father and brother, as well as lover and friend, or who might have seen themselves deprived, by one sad stroke, of affection, protection, and support.

Lady Pontypool, while her niece thus stood struck and gazing with an air of deep sadness, continued to look at her with the eyes of affection and curiosity; and in a moment after, when her mind had somewhat recovered its natural tone, Mary caught the expression of her aunt's countenance, and replied to it at once, "Here are sad news, my dear aunt, which Lacy gives me. Poor Helen's father is be-

lieved to be killed, and Major Kennedy so badly wounded, that I see Lacy entertains but little hope——.” The tears started to her eyes, but she dashed them away and went on,—“ Lacy wishes me to receive Kennedy here instead of letting him go to one of the hospitals, and I certainly shall do so.”

“ But, my dear Mary, will not that look strange ?” exclaimed Lady Pontypool. “ Indeed, Mary, people began to talk already, and say you were going to marry Major Kennedy.”

“ Well then !” said Mary, “ to make it not look strange, I will marry him on his bed of death, that I may nurse him as his wife, and mourn him as his widow :” and with the irrepressible tears gushing from her eyes, she rushed out of the room and sought a moment’s solitude in her own apartments. In a few minutes, however, she returned, and throwing her arms round her aunt’s neck, she said, “ Forgive me, my dear aunt, for speaking so hastily ; but I thought you must have seen long ago what my feelings are towards Kennedy, and what his are towards me.”

“ But, my dear Mary,” replied my aunt Pontypool, “ you know I never see these things as other people do ;” and she said very true, for she never saw those things, and very seldom any thing else, as other people do. It seemed as if she were looking at the world with a glass that had a wave in it, so that every object obtained a slight twist ere it reached her vision.

“ Well, my dear aunt,” said Mary sadly, “ at all events you never saw me behave to any other man as I have to him. But, however, I am resolved to do as Lacy suggests ; for feeling towards Kennedy as I do feel, and attached to him by promises, which to my mind are as binding as if I were already his wife, I should think I was neglecting my duty if I were to suffer him to linger on in an hospital, without any care but from the hands of hirelings.”

“ Well, my dear Mary, I am sure I do not object,” replied Lady Pontypool ; “ and I really do think you had better marry him at once, as you say, and then people can have nothing to talk about. I dare say the ambassador’s chaplain would perform the ceremony whenever you like.”

Lady Mary smiled faintly ; for though what she had said in regard to marrying Major Kennedy in his present state had been but an ebullition of feeling, without any real purpose of

the kind, it gave her no pain to hear her aunt advocate it as a serious proposal. She rang the bell, however, and finding that the butler was still in the house, she gave directions, that if Major Kennedy could by any means be found, and could be moved, if he were in any of the hospitals, without danger, that he should be immediately brought to her house. Scarcely was the butler gone when the other servants, in consequence of her former orders, appeared before the porte cochère, with one of those large old lumbering carriages which permitted a sort of bed to be made up in it, by stretching planks from seat to seat. The noise which this occasioned, for the house was situated in a quiet street, called Lady Mary instantly to the window, and then giving way to feelings that refused restraint, she ran down stairs at once to the door. It was not Kennedy, however, and though that was a disappointment, yet it was compensated by beholding the face of old Colonel Adair, a little paler than usual, it is true, but still not looking very ill after all.

“Your servants, my dear Lady Mary,” he said, as soon as he saw her, “have brought me here against my will; but indeed I cannot think of making your house an hospital.”

“But I will have it so, Colonel Adair!” replied Lady Mary; “pray let them move you in. We have plenty of room both for yourself and Mr. Green, who is, I am sorry to see, wounded also.”

“A flea-bite mine, my lady, a mere flea-bite,” replied Adjutant Green; “they say I shall have a stiff knee for the rest of my life; but if I can get on horseback again, I don’t care, and my sword-hand will soon be well. But as for the Colonel, the doctors say the ball has shattered the small bone of his leg, and good luck that it did not touch the large one. However, I am very much obliged, my lady, but I, for my part, will go to the hospital. You’ll have plenty to do here, ma’am; there’s poor Major Kennedy badly hurt, not half an hour’s march behind, poor fellow! and I am sure, my lady, if you would be kind enough, he needs help much more than I do. They are carrying him on a hand-litter, for he could not stand a carriage, and yet would come on. If some of these good fellows, now, would but go out and bring him here.”

“I have sent already,” said Lady Mary, more calmly

than might have been expected ; "but we have plenty of room for you also, Mr. Green." The Adjutant, however, kept his resolution, and after Colonel Adair had been moved from the carriage to a room upon the ground floor, he himself ordered the men to take him to one of the hospitals, where every care and kindness was shown to him.

In the mean time, Colonel Adair, as soon as he was placed at ease in his bed, was visited by Lady Pontypool and her niece. His first questions showed them that he was acquainted with all that had befallen Helen, and that his anxiety and distress on her account were doing him more serious injury than even the wound which he had received upon the field. The tidings, however, contained in the postscript of Lacy's note, afforded the best balm for the hurt ; and though Mary Denham did not tell the exact words in which Lacy had couched the information, yet Colonel Adair knew the friendly and somewhat enthusiastic character of the young officer too well, to doubt that he would use every possible means of restoring his daughter to him. "I am sure Captain Lacy is infinitely kind," he said ; "I never can be grateful enough for all that he has done for me and mine."

Lady Pontypool looked at her niece with a meaning smile, which instantly made Mary resolve to caution her, the very first opportunity, against betraying Lacy's secret; but at the very moment a servant entered, and spoke something in a low voice.

"It is poor Major Kennedy," said Mary, rising, and trembling in every limb ; "I must go and see what can be done directly. A surgeon has been sent for, Colonel Adair, and will be here directly. I will be back with you in a few moments."

"Pray do not hurry, my dear young lady," replied the old soldier, who, with his eyes hermetically sealed towards Lucy and his own daughter, had been somewhat more quicksighted than Lady Pontypool respecting Lady Mary Denham and Major Kennedy ; at least, from what he had seen on his last visit at that house, he had been led to entertain some suspicions.

Lady Mary Denham then left him with her aunt, and hurried out into the hall ; but as the wounded officer had been borne into Brussels by relays of men, upon a sort of temporary litter, they had carried him at once into the cham-

ber which was destined for his reception, and were standing resting at the door of the room waiting their reward. Kennedy's wounds had been already dressed by the surgeons on the field, but still, when Mary Denham entered, it was a ghastly spectacle that met her eyes. There he lay almost fainting with exhaustion, his fine features sharpened and shrunk with suffering and loss of blood ; his clear keen eye dim and hazy, and his brown cheek deprived of every particle of colour. Round his brows were bound many a fold of bandages, and as he lay supine, without attempting in the least to turn, Mary could perceive that over his left arm and shoulder were many similar coverings. There was something in her step, however, though it was as light as that with which a mother treads the chamber of her sick child, which instantly made Kennedy raise his eyes, and as he did so there came up in them a gleam of their former light. The butler who, with the true divining powers of a servant, comprehended the whole—and had indeed comprehended it long before—ran to place a chair for his lady by the side of the wounded officer ; and then, beckoning a fellow servant out of the room, turned to the peasants who had carried Major Kennedy thither, and proceeded to settle accounts with them, leaving the door open, it is true, for pure propriety's sake ; but otherwise, very considerately, giving Lady Mary an opportunity of venting her first feelings towards Major Kennedy without witnesses. For an instant, Kennedy seemed to find a difficulty in speaking, and he merely greeted Mary by a look of fond affection, and by raising his unwounded arm to take her hand in his, as she sat down beside his couch. Mary gazed down upon him, and the tears, thick and fast, fell upon his pillow, and some even upon his cheek.

“ I had a presentiment that it would be thus, dear Mary ! ” he said, in a low and feeble tone ; “ I thought such happiness could not remain long unminglede. But, dear Mary, will not my being brought here make the ill-natured world talk ? ”

“ Let it,” replied Mary Denham ; and then bending down her head beside him, while a brighter blush than ever stained it in her happiest days, crimsoned her beautiful cheek, she spoke a few words to him, in a tone which infallibly prevented their being heard by any one else.

A warm and glowing smile played round Kennedy's lip.

"Oh, Mary, Mary!" he said, "you are indeed an angel. But it would be too selfish in me to suffer such a thing."

"Not selfish at all, Kennedy," replied Mary, "for it would be conferring the greatest happiness you can on me, by enabling me to attend you constantly without impropriety."

"But suppose I should die, Mary," he said, gazing in her face; "but I do not think I shall," he added; "for if there be a power on earth to keep a man alive after such wounds as mine, it will be found in such love as yours. Do what you will about it, dear Mary; but first speak to your aunt, by all means."

"I have! I will again," answered Mary Denham; "but thank God here come the surgeons, and I will leave you with them for the present."

Thus saying she left him, and returned to Colonel Adair. But it may be necessary to say what use my Aunt Pontypool had made of her absence. No sooner had Mary left the room than Lady Pontypool, as if divining that her niece would enjoin her to silence, and afraid of not having time to accomplish thefeat she meditated, darted upon the subject of Charles Lacy again.

"He is indeed—I mean Charles," she said—"he is, indeed, a most excellent and admirable young man. Very seldom does one see such talents and such virtues united. She will be a happy woman, Colonel Adair, who has such a man for her husband."

"Happy, indeed!" said Colonel Adair, with a sigh, wishing for just such a husband for his own poor Helen. "Happy, indeed! Lady Pontypool. I one time thought, and even understood you to say, that Captain Lacy was engaged to Lady Mary Denham; but I have lately entertained doubts."

This in some degree, opened Lady Pontypool's eyes, and showed her that Colonel Adair was as ignorant of the feelings of Charles Lacy as she herself had been, till a few days before, and she hesitated as to what she would do. The least accident in the world would have saved her at the moment—the entrance of a servant, a sound in the street—would have preserved her from explosion; but no servant came in—the street was quite silent. She looked at Colonel Adair—the thought of his wound and his daughter's unpleasant situation—she fancied how melancholy he must be,

and what a comfort it would be to him to know that the fondest hopes he could have formed for his daughter's happiness, were realized in the mutual attachment of Lacy and Helen ; and so, smoothing her apron, she told him the whole story. Colonel Adair looked certainly astonished, and there might be a mingling of pleasure in his feelings, but Lady Pontypool did not by any means succeed in producing that purely agreeable impression which she anticipated.

" It is very strange that I have not heard this before," was his reply ; " Helen is not accustomed to have any concealments from me."

" Oh, but, my dear cousin," rejoined Lady Pontypool, " you forget you have seen so little of Helen since we came to Brussels, that she may not have had an opportunity. You were always away at Nivelles, or at some of those places, and when you did come to dinner you generally went away as soon as the dessert was upon the table."

" True, true !" replied Colonel Adair, " she has had no opportunity, poor girl ; but I hope that Lord Methwyn has been informed. Lacy must have had occasion to write to his father, and I would not take such a step without his probation and consent."

" Oh, I dare say he has informed him," said Lady Pontypool ; " and, besides, there is no fear of his consent being withheld. He is the best tempered man in the world, and so proud and fond of his son that he will do any thing for him. Oh, I will undertake to manage Lord Methwyn, if there should be any difficulty."

Colonel Adair had almost hinted, in polite terms, that he would rather not have any management in the matter, but he thought of Helen's happiness, and crushed down the risings up of pride. He resolved, however, to speak no more on the subject to any one till he could see either Lacy or Lord Methwyn himself, in order that there might not be the slightest cause to say that he had given countenance to the engagement of his daughter and Lacy, in case of any opposition ; and as he was thus wisely resolving, Lady Mary returned, little knowing what had been accomplished in her absence. She sat a few minutes with Colonel Adair, during which time the surgeons who had been with Major Kennedy visited his wounds. They then came to the apartment of Colonel Adair, but their answers in regard to their other patient were of that cautious and guarded description,

which left the heart of Mary Denham as much bruised as they found it. He was wounded very severely, they said, and in many places. Several sabre wounds, however, they went on to observe, were not otherwise dangerous than as they had greatly weakened him; but there were also several shot wounds, the result of which could not yet be ascertained: they hoped, however, that they were not likely to prove fatal. Such was the cold consolation which Mary Denham received from the medical men, who, after having made this report, proceeded to examine the wound of Colonel Adair, of which they spoke much more favourably, promising him speedy convalescence, and removing all fear of the necessity of amputation.

Lady Mary and Lady Pontypool had left the room during their actual attendance on Colonel Adair; and strange as it may seem, their report, unpropitious as it was in regard to Major Kennedy, confirmed in the strongest manner a resolution which Mary had previously taken, namely, if she found it possible, to give her hand at once to the wounded man. Other people would have thought of a thousand other things before they made up their mind to such a proceeding—they would have considered all the worldly and prudential *pros* and *cons*;—but Mary Denham only thought of what she should have wished from the man she loved had she been dying—only considered how great would be the comfort and happiness to him. She accordingly sent for the chaplain of the embassy, and not choosing to trust to Lady Pontypool, explained to him calmly, and like a lady, the exact circumstances in which she stood towards Major Kennedy, and expressed her wishes without either circumlocution or embarrassment. There was something so touching in her devotion,—ay, and even in the calm simplicity with which she detailed her feelings and her purposes,—that the good clergyman was moved. There might be some little difficulties made, he said, by other parties, as it was in general considered necessary that marriages in foreign countries should take place in the chapel of the embassy, or the house of the highest British authority their resident; but he had no doubt, he said, these could be removed, and that the representatives of the King of England, for the time being, at Brussels, would consent to be present at the ceremony, in order to give it the necessary formalities. With the view of making the arrangements required, he then took his leave,

and by his kind exertions all obstacles were removed. The happiness which the very thought gave evidently to the wounded man, was full repayment and support to Mary Denham under the execution of her purpose; and early the next morning, in the presence of the British envoy, the ceremony of marriage was performed between her and Kennedy.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Henry Adair re-entered the chamber of Ensign Williamson, he found the surgeon and two assistants still with him. They had just concluded a severe operation, to which they had had recourse for the purpose of raising the part of the sternum which had been driven in by the kick of the horse, and under the course of which the patient had twice fainted. He now, however, felt greatly relieved, could speak aloud, and seemed to feel confident of recovery. There was a certain something nevertheless, in his countenance which made Henry Adair feel no slight doubt upon that point; and the old surgeon, Monsieur de Cl—x, on being asked in private his sincere opinion, replied, at once, that there was little, if any probability of saving the sufferer's life. "I will not say that such a thing is impossible," he replied; "for in surgery we every day see miracles; but I never saw a worse case recover. However, there is no immediate danger,—that is to say, none within a few hours; and when I visit him again at night, I shall be able to tell whether he will certainly die or may still entertain a hope."

Such was the exact sort of answer which Henry Adair wished, and of course he respected the surgeon the more for giving such, inasmuch as one of the rarest birds in the earth, and—since the zoological gardens have rendered us familiar with strange things—much rarer than a black swan, is a good answerer. One half of the world do not answer straightforwardly from imbecility, from non-competence of comprehension, or non-competence of response, they either do not fully understand you, or cannot clearly express themselves;—the other half (very nearly) do not answer straightforwardly from cunning, at the head of which class

are the two non-respondent professions, law and medicine. Old Monsieur de Cl——x, however, always did answer to the point, and had that peculiar happiness of reply, that he seemed to combine every thing that the questioner wished to know in the shortest space and under the clearest view.

Now Henry Adair's purpose and desire, on the present occasion, was certainly not to distress the wounded man by questions which might irritate and retard his recovery; yet, undoubtedly, if death were inevitable, to endeavour to lead him, by every persuasion, to repair as far as he could all that he had done amiss. He therefore determined to wait till after the surgeon's evening visit before he propounded the questions which he had resolved to put; and in the meantime he remained beside him, together with one of the old gentleman's assistants, paying him every sort of kindly attention, and soothing him as much as possible.

One of the surgeon's strictest injunctions had been to refrain from speaking as far as possible; but this rule the wounded man seemed very much inclined to break, notwithstanding the great pain that he suffered when he did so. He twice or three times asked Henry Adair whether he had seen Lacy, and if he had had any conversation with him; and on finding that they had walked to Paris together, a sort of feverish uneasiness seemed to take possession of him. Several times he hinted that there was something he should very much wish to say, yet still he broke off, adding, "But I shall recover, I am sure I shall, and then I can set all that to rights."

Once or twice, too, he asked, "You do not think I shall die, Adair do you? I wonder what becomes of one when one dies? whether one begins to feel again directly or how?"

"In regard to the degree of your danger," replied Henry Adair, "the surgeon would not give any decided opinion this morning; but as to what becomes of the soul after death, we may be very sure that not the apparent interval of an instant takes place between our loss of consciousness here, and our walking in the wide world of eternity. Even supposing that a hundred million of years were to elapse between the moment of our death and the moment at which we are roused to judgment, those long years would not seem to us even the space of one minute. Time is an invention

of our own, or, at the utmost, is but marked by the consciousness of passing events. As soon as that consciousness is at an end to any one, for him, time is annihilated also. Depend upon it, whether judgment follow instantly upon death, or thousands of years intervene, man will perceive no difference, and to him it will be immediate."

This doctrine did not seem at all palatable to young Williamson, who vowed he did not understand such nice distinctions, and moved himself sulkily to the other side of the bed, though the very effort gave him infinite pain. As the day went on, Henry Adair only left him for a few minutes at a time; but whenever he did so, and returned, he observed a marked change in the sufferer. The pale cheeks became flushed and fiery, his eyes acquired an unnatural brightness, his lips were parched and dry, and there was a continual thirst upon him which no liquid could satisfy.—He was restless and uneasy, too, to an excessive degree, and no persuasions could prevent him from tossing about in his bed, though he thereby only inflicted fresh agony on himself. At length the old surgeon again appeared, looked at the patient, felt his pulse, asked a few questions, and then called Henry Adair into the next room. "It is necessary, sir," he said, "to inform you that your friend will die, and as every man has something to settle before he leaves this world, he had better be informed of the fact.—Do you think he is afraid to die?"

"Sir, he is an officer in the British army!" replied Henry Adair.

"That may be, sir," replied the surgeon: "and he may be the bravest man in the field in the world, and yet not like the aspect of death when he comes quietly to one's bedside. I have seen it a hundred times—ay, a thousand."

"At all events," replied Mr. Adair, "it is absolutely necessary that he should be informed of his state. A man who is afraid of death is not worthy to live; and though it may not be the most pleasant thing in the world, yet every one must meet it as he may. Nor do I see any good in covering our eyes from the executioner. If you think there is no chance of recovery left, which may be taken away by a knowledge of his danger, you had better tell him at once."

"My sincere opinion is, that he has no chance left," replied the surgeon. "I mean to say, I think he will be dead in four-and-twenty hours, and why I think that it would be

better to tell him at once is, that probably delirium will come on in the night, which may never leave him till his death."

"Then by all means tell him his state at once," answered Henry Adair; "if he be willing to use that time rightly, there is many an important thing to be done."

Thus saying, he led the way back to the chamber of the dying man, whose eyes turned anxiously to the faces of his friend and the surgeon as they approached. The old man then sat down by his bedside, and said, "I think it a duty, Monsieur, to advise you, if you have any affairs of importance remaining unsettled, to give them your immediate attention; for though the result of such accidents, as that which you have met with, is ever uncertain, yet it is not right to conceal from you that you are in immediate danger."

The young soldier was silent for several minutes, but his lip quivered convulsively, and his hand might be seen grasping the bed-clothes in the agony of despair. "Then I am dying!" he said at length, "can't I recover? Ask him, Adair, if nothing can be done—is there no way? Is there no chance? Ask him, ask him, for curse me if I can take the trouble of talking French to him now."

"I am sorry to say, Williamson," replied Henry Adair, "that he has already told me, there is no chance, and he thought it necessary that you should be told this at once, that you might not delay the settlement of your affairs and the preparation of your mind too long."

"Good God! then he thinks that it will be very soon!" cried the wounded man, "not to-night! surely not to-night! Ask him, Adair, ask him! *Dites-moi, Monsieur!*"—and he was going on to inquire himself, when Henry Adair interrupted him by saying, "No, he does not say so soon as that; but he is afraid that fever may bring on delirium, and you then would not be able to make any legal arrangements."

"O, but I have nothing to settle!" cried the other, impatiently. "I'd rather you had not told me, and let me die in peace."

"But would you not wish your father to be sent for, if he be any where near?" demanded Adair. But the face of the other became flushed with anger in a moment, and he cried, "My father! d—n him, no!"

Henry Adair started back in horror, and the other went on, "Why if it had not been for him, I should never have got into this cursed scrape. I owe him nothing but evil—he has managed to ruin me and get me killed here, and, for aught I know, may have sent me to hell hereafter. I'll not see him, I would not see him if he were here—but he is far enough off. He's in London by this time."

Henry Adair was silent; for to a mind like his there was something so fearful in hearing a child pile curses on his father's head, that for the moment he could not find words to answer, and when thought came to his aid he judged that it would be better not.

After a time, the surgeon took his leave and withdrew, promising to come again towards midnight, and the assistant whom he left behind having been installed in the adjoining room, Henry Adair sat down to endeavour, in the first place, to soothe the mind of the dying man; in the next, to give his feelings a more just and noble direction; and in the last place, to induce him to tell all that he knew concerning Helen Adair, and to make reparation, as far as he could, for the pain and anxiety he had caused. He knew not, however, the difficulty of the task he had undertaken, nor, to say truth, was he well calculated to excite it. With all his enthusiasm, and with all his natural tenderness and generosity of heart, his mind was too speculative and his manners too straightforward and decided, to accord with those of his former schoolfellow at that moment. Williamson himself, too, was irritated not softened by the near approach of death. He had calculated upon long life and plenteous enjoyment, and he felt as if Heaven wronged him in depriving him of all those sweets whereunto he had lifted up his expectations. He was in the precise situation in which to follow the advice of the worthless wife of Job, and to "curse God and die!" Corporeal pain also and the irritation of fever, tended to render him, whose temper was naturally headstrong and violent, ten thousand times more impatient and vehement. All the efforts therefore of Henry Adair to soothe him proved in vain, and every attempt he made to lead his mind to higher views was instantly counteracted by either angry irritability, vain self-conceit, or the long nourished and deeply implanted errors of which his father's house had been the nursery.

When, at length, Adair began to speak of Helen and of
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Leey, all the poor remains of young Williamson's stock of patience seemed to desert him. He cursed, he swore, he blasphemed; and, rising indignantly from his bedside, Henry Adair prepared to leave him to his fate, when the wandering and incoherent words in which he vented his passion showed that the delirium which the surgeon had prognosticated was already coming upon him. The kindness of Henry's heart then got the better of his indignation, and he determined to remain with him through the night.

A fearful night indeed it was. The unhappy man was afraid of death, and was afraid of hell, and conscious of evil without feeling contrition, he raved upon these two subjects through six or seven weary hours, apparently never dreaming of repentance, and only hating and struggling against the Almighty hand that chastised him. With his frenzy too there were mingled touches of the idle levity of his former habits, which formed a terrible contrast with the awful nature of the matter on which it turned. Often during the night he would seize Adair's hand, and grasp it hard, exclaiming. "Isn't it a shame—isn't it a cursed shame that I should be going to die and be damned, as Serjeant Jones told the drummer's dog? But it is very terrible, Adair. I'm in pain enough here! what shall I be there? I wonder why I should die! And then to think of going and being dragged up amongst all the people in the world, and hearing every thing wrong one has done told out, and then be sent never to be happy again. It is a shame, I say—curse me if I'll die and be served so. I'd rather shoot myself first."

Thus raved he on, and in this state was he when at eleven o'clock the old surgeon again visited him. Finding him in such a situation, with all hope of saving him passed, Monsieur de Cl----x ordered some tranquillizing medicine, with a view of allaying both the actual pain and the great irritation he suffered; but the effect seemed different from that he had expected to produce, and, during the next three hours, after he left the dying man, Williamson seemed more wildly delirious than ever. Towards morning, however, he became a little calmer, and then fell into a heavy sleep, during which he often muttered and tossed about, but it remained unbroken, and Henry Adair, wearied out of all the exertion he had lately undertaken, called the surgeon's assistant, and proceeding to the next room cast himself into

an arm chair and fell into a light sleep. He had not thus slept two hours, however, when the surgeon's assistant woke him to inform him that Mr. Williamson was awake and asked for him.

"Is he better?" demanded Henry Adair. The other raised his shoulders till they grazed his ears, replying that he was free from delirium, but that his strength was failing. When Henry Adair entered the chamber of the sick man, however, he saw that the change was marked indeed. He had left him tossing about with a bright red spot on either cheek; his parched lips protruding and of the colour of fire, and all his features swelled and inflamed; but now he was lying quite still, his face was an ashy gray, his lips pale, his features sharpened, and as he slowly turned his eye at the sound of approaching steps, the very movement showed how completely the whole being was subdued within him. "Adair!" he said, in a hollow voice, as the other sat down by his bed-side once more. "Adair! it is coming very fast! I am dying now, I feel! and I am afraid I have been very mad and very foolish all last night. I have a remembrance of saying and doing a thousand very wrong and very silly things. Forgive me, Adair, if I have offended you! You have been kind to me all through my life, and are kind to me to the last."

"I have nothing to forgive indeed!" replied Henry Adair. "I was not offended, my poor fellow. I was only sorry to see that you would not make atonement while it was in your power as the only means of smoothing the way before you. Remember Williamson, we are all taught that it is never too late, and the memory of having done one good act before you die will, depend upon it, be your greatest comfort at the point of death."

"I know it will, I know it will," replied Williamson, "and it was on that account I sent for you—but I do not know, Adair, how you will like it yourself."

"Like what?" demanded Henry Adair, in no slight surprise; "I shall like any thing that will make you more comfortable. Like what?"

"Why, what I have to tell," replied young Williamson; "but mind it is your own fault, for you say—at least you said so last night—that it is my duty to tell all that can conduce to make others more happy, and to do justice to those who have been injured."

"I say so still, I say so still!" cried Henry Adair; "and if by doing so you were to deprive me of every thing on earth, I should say you only did right to tell it."

"Very well, very well," replied the other, "I will tell the whole—lean down your head that I may not tire myself with speaking, for I am desperate weak this morning, and my breath comes short, and my breast is very bad, though not so bad as yesterday. However, do you remember one day going to the church at —, when you came suddenly down to visit us in the country, and coming home raving about a lady you had seen there—well, that was Helen Adair, whom you were talking of just now."

"I know that," replied Henry Adair, with his cheek somewhat heated, "I have seen her since."

"Well, I would not tell you who it was, because I was in love with Helen Adair myself; and, after you were out of the room, my father told me I had done quite right, and desired me to do every thing on earth to keep you from making acquaintance with her, which he and I contrived to do. I thought it very strange that he should wish me to marry a girl without much money, but I was very glad of it, and one day I saw him, when we got to the house in Hill Street, put away one single paper into a large iron chest, built into the wall of a little room behind the dining-room. Well, ever since then he has been working away to bring about my marriage with Helen Adair, and I gave him the best help I could; but we were unlucky in our schemes, till at length, just lately, at Brussels he proposed to me to carry her off and take her to Germany, by the way of Namur. He said that she would be certain then to marry me, without farther ado, because she knew that if she did not, her character would be ruined. When he explained it all to me, however, I told him I would have nothing to do with it, and could have nothing to do with it, for I could neither get leave of absence nor quit the army without leave, and, in short, that the whole business might get me shot. He then curst and swore, and vowed that I should do it, and when he found me as obstinate as he was, he said that I would be the ruin of him and my whole family. I told him, if he would explain how that could be, I would do my best, but I would do nothing at all unless the whole was told me, how my marrying Helen Adair would save them and all. He then shewed me that Lord Methwyn,

whose agent he was, had dismissed him, and that all he had to depend upon was what he got from your father as his agent. 'He gives me double commission,' my father said, speaking of yours, and then he told me why. It seems that your great grandfather made two wills, the first leaving all he had to your father; the second, leaving half to the old Colonel; but your father and mine between them concealed the last will, and got the witnesses to it out of the way, and that very will was the paper I saw my father hiding away. 'Now,' said my father, 'I have always had Lord Adair under my thumb by the having that will in my possession; but that blundering old fool, Lady Pontypool, has stumbled upon part of the truth from one of the witnesses, whom we got into the army, and sent every where he was likely to get killed in, but without success; and she has gone to Lord Adair and proposed to him to patch up the matter by marrying his son Henry to Helen Adair. The old Lord, in a great fright, has consented, and if you do not get hold of Helen Adair before the old Colonel hears of the business, and the matter is formally settled, we are all ruined, and I may get a touch of Botany Bay for my pains.'—I saw how the whole matter was in a muddle; my father told me that if I could but get away for two days, so as to make Helen know that her reputation was lost if she did not marry me, she, or any other woman, would do it at once; and I agreed to try it upon two conditions, first, that he would give me up the key of that strong box, as I did not choose to be his slave all my life, as he had made your father. I chose to have the whip in my own hands, and next I made it a bargain that he should get Helen's maid to go with her, because I did not choose to be thought quite a blackguard if ever the story was told. The last, he said, would be easily managed, and would be all the better, because, if the maid went with the mistress, nobody afterwards would believe that Helen had not gone with her own good will; but about the first he made a terrible piece of work, and called me a great many hard names, saying, that I was an ungrateful viper, and that all he was doing was to serve me; but I knew better, Henry, and I held out. When he found that would not do, he tried to palm off a wrong key upon me, but I knew the key as well as he did himself, and so I told him I was not to be taken in; and then he laughed and said I should have been a lawyer. But I am

growing faint and so I must make haste. After I got the key all the rest was easily managed. We marched for Nivelles on the morning of the 15th, but I contrived to get back at night. My father managed every thing ; he bribed one of Lady Mary's foreign servants' and one of the waiters at the great ball, so that we knew every thing the minute it happened. All our plan, too, was laid out for the journey ; and I was only to show myself to Helen from time to time, and to play my part with her. Then my father was to go on to Namur, and joining her there, carry her across by Aix la Chapelle to Cologne, and do what he could to bully or persuade her, giving himself out for her own father by the way, and I was to join them as soon as I could. But you know the sudden advance of the French, and the defeat of Blucher, threw all our plans into confusion. I was obliged to gallop back to Nivelles, instead of going after Helen. She fell into the hands of the French at Quatre Bras——”

“And where is she now ?” demanded Henry Adair, eagerly.

“Either at Calais or in England !” replied the other, in a voice which evidently decreased in strength every minute ; “I was taken prisoner, you know, at Quatre Bras, and finding that Helen was there, I did not know what to do about her. So I told them that she was my wife, and begged she might be sent to Calais, there to meet my father. At the same time I contrived to bribe a fellow to take a letter for me to my father in Brussels, and there I left the matter, and know no more about it.”

He paused, and Henry Adair also was silent, for one part of the tale which he had just heard was full of such terrible interest to himself, that it deprived him of all power of reply. In every thing that concerned Helen Adair he felt all that a warm, eager enthusiast could feel, indignant at the treatment she had undergone, grieved for the distress and anguish of mind that she must have suffered, and experiencing all that yearning of the heart to fly to her relief, which none but a fine and ardent soul like his could feel ; but such sensations were crossed and interrupted in their course by the deep, burning, glowing anguish of shame for a parent's conduct —a parent whom he loved, and had striven through life to honour in despite of one degrading weakness. Now, however,—now, what could be his feelings towards that parent,

when he found that long ago he had cast away from him the only true source of honour, pure integrity—that for a sum of pitiful gold—of dross, which as Henry thought of it, grew hateful in his eyes, he, his father, had plundered another, taken what was not his own, submitted through life to truckle and bow to the will of a villain; and had acted as, and felt himself to be inferior to, the low swindler, that fleeces the fools of a gaming-house.

Henry Adair felt his heart debased, cast down, trampled upon! That he should be the son of a common cheat! that his father, whom he had so tenderly dealt with in all heir opposition, should sink at once to a poor-spirited, raudulent knave! It was more than his heart or his brain could bear; and during the whole of young Williamson's story, and for many minutes afterwards, he remained totally silent, with the exception of the one brief exclamation regarding Helen, which we have mentioned. His head hung down upon his chest, his bright dark eye was fixed sightless upon one spot on the floor, and his hand played, all unconscious, with the tassels of the dying man's bed, while agonies more terrible than the other had soul to suffer, raged within his bosom.

"Well!" said the faint voice of young Williamson, at length,—"Well, Adair, now I have told you all, what do you say to it?"

"Say to it!" replied Henry Adair,—"say to it!—that I will make him refund every sixpence, or die."

"You will not do that without exposing him," said the other.

"I care not," answered Henry,—"I care not whom I expose, or what I do. If I suffer such a disgrace to continue one hour after I know it, I make myself a partner in the villainy; and I will not live disgraced! But let us think of you, Williamson; is it not a comfort to you thus to have unburdened your breast? Do you not feel happier, lighter, better, for the load you have cast off you?—for having done what you can to atone, by telling this tale, for all the evil share you had in the deeds which it relates?"

"Perhaps I do," replied the dying man,—"perhaps I do!—yet I should like to live a little longer still."

"But if that be not possible, you will die more happy," said Henry Adair; "you have made the first great act of

atonement, and the darkest cloud is swept away from the awful future."

"I do think that I do feel easier at heart," said the dying man with a faint smile; "and I am sure if you do not care about the matter being known, I should not care about it either. As to that, indeed, I am very willing to do all that I can to get the old Colonel back his own again;—indeed, I wish it very much, poor man! and I am sure I am very sorry to think that I took any part whatever in vexing him, or poor Helen Adair; I wish to God I had held out firm, and refused to have any thing to do with it."

"That is right! that is right!" said Henry Adair; "you are in the right way now, Williamson. Fear not, my poor fellow. We might well feel sure that a God of mercy, who has surrounded his creatures with so many undeserved blessings, even in this world, would not be inexorable to them in another, when they have done all they can to remedy and atone for that which they have done amiss—we might well believe it, even if our religion did not give us the full assurance thereof. So be comforted, Williamson!"

"I am comforted already, Adair," replied the other; "but I will do more: if you will open my writing-desk there, you will find the key I mentioned, and a paper folded up. The paper I made my father give me with the key, saying that he gave and made over to me that box in the room behind the dining-room, with all that it contained; and I now give it to you, Adair—stay, if you and the French fellow can lift me up, I will write upon it."

What he desired was done, and he scrawled a few words upon the paper, assigning his right therein to Henry Adair; but the writing was so tremulous and unlike his ordinary hand, that he looked at it with a sad and fearful glance, as a new evidence of the change that was falling upon him. He had wisdom enough, however, to make the surgeon's assistant testify that it was his writing; and then, giving it with the key to Henry Adair, he said, "If you take that, and make haste, you may get to London before my father comes back from Calais, and then you can take the will at once. I am sure I wish to do what is right—now at least; and if you can spare my father in the matter, I hope you will."

"That I certainly will," replied Henry Adair; "but I

will not leave you, Williamson. You seem to me to be better; and we shall hear what old Monsieur de Cl—x says when he comes."

"He will only say I am dying," said Williamson; "you cannot tell what I feel here in my chest. The pain has nearly left me; but it seems as if there were a mass of ice lying there, and as if all my lungs and heart were gone. However, I do not mind it so much now, somehow: I am not so much afraid;—and do you know if any of our chaplains could be got for me, I should like to have a talk with one of them for an hour or so before I die."

"That shall be done immediately," replied Henry Adair; "I will go for one myself, as soon as ever Monsieur de Cl—x has seen you. I think I hear his voice on the stairs now."

Nor was he mistaken. The old surgeon appeared the moment after, and went through all the ordinary ceremonies which are bestowed by medical men upon the bed of death. He did not, however, augur at all more favourably of the event of his patient's case from the comparative tranquillity into which he had fallen, nor from the cessation of pain. On the contrary, he informed Henry Adair, when questioned apart, that the progress of the whole had been much more rapid than he could have imagined, and that, notwithstanding some cordials which he ordered, he did not think his patient would see the end of the day.

He left Adair to do as he pleased, in regard to giving the dying man exact information respecting the very near approach of death, and, promising to return again in a few hours, took his leave. Henry Adair then proceeded at once to seek for the religious aid which Williamson required, and having found one of the chaplains who had followed the British army to Paris, he easily induced him to go immediately to the bedside of the dying man, in order to afford him what consolation and advice he could. In the meanwhile he himself proceeded to his own hotel, and despatched a few lines to Lacy, telling him that he had obtained important information, which he much wished to communicate.

On his return to the dwelling of Ensign Williamson, he found the clergyman still with him, and remained in the saloon adjoining, till it was time for the sufferer to take a second of the cordials which the surgeon had ordered. On

entering he found the dying man very tranquil, though his cheek was moistened with tears. He said nothing as Henry gave him his draught, but looked in his face with an expression of gratitude, and pressed his hand.

"I rather think," said the clergyman, in a low tone, "that his voice is gone, for he has been listening to me attentively; but for some time has not uttered a word."

Williamson seemed to divine what was said, though being spoken in a whisper he could not have heard it. He made an attempt to speak, but it was vain, and from that moment, appearing to resign himself to his fate, he did not renew the attempt, but remained calmly awaiting the end. Towards three o'clock, he fell into a tranquil sleep, but in about an hour after awoke with a sharp start, gazed round him with an expression of fear, and then drew one long heavy sigh. An aguish sort of shudder passed over him, and the next moment the eyes became fixed, losing all expression in the glassy vacuity of death.

The chaplain had remained beside him till the last moment, and Henry Adair, explaining that business which admitted no delay, called him instantly to England, requested the worthy clergyman, and received his promise, to see the last rites performed towards the body of the unfortunate young man. He had just concluded his directions in these respects, when a message was brought to inform him that Captain Lacy awaited him below, and placing a sufficient sum in the hands of the clergyman, to meet all probable expenses, he hurried down to inform his friend of what had occurred, and to take measures for rendering the information he had obtained profitable to the ends of justice.

CHAPTER XII.

HENRY ADAIR found his friend at the door of the hotel on horseback; but as soon as Lacy perceived that Adair had his hat and stick in his hand, ready to return to his hotel, he dismounted, and taking his arm, walked on with him, followed by a servant with his horse.

"I came to ask you whether you have gained any further information concerning Helen," Lacy said, "and to tell you that I am ordered home to-morrow with despatches, as

I hoped. Indeed, if they be ready before it is very late, I shall set out to-night, in order to have some hours free at Calais."

"Of Helen I have heard nothing, but what you knew before," replied Henry Adair; "she is most likely at Calais, for Williamson, it seems, wrote to his father to meet her there; but if you be going to England, give me but time to write a letter to my father, and I will go with you. Williamson is dead!"

"Indeed!" cried Lacy; "so soon: that is terrible! I am afraid that he was not very well prepared to meet our great enemy—death; and had I shot him yesterday morning, that very circumstance would have lain heavy at my heart."

"Well it might," replied Henry Adair; "but he died in a better condition than I expected. However, as I said, let me but write to my father, and I will go with you."

"Indeed, Adair," replied Lacy, gazing upon his haggard and anxious features; "indeed I think you had better not. Deeply obliged to you as I am for all the interest you have taken in this painful business, regarding Miss Adair, still considering all circumstances, I cannot hope or expect that you should exert yourself any farther in the pursuit. Old Williamson, who has persecuted her for his son, will have no object in detaining her now that his son is dead, and will, depend upon it, endeavour to shield himself by restoring her to her friends directly; so that my search will doubtless be greatly lightened. You had better stay and take some repose, for you must be fatigued, and you look ill."

"I wish you could say that I look dying," replied Henry Adair; "but in regard to Williamson, you mistake all. I have heard the whole from the unhappy young man, whose eyes are just closed, and I possess the power of doing right to those who have been wronged; but for that purpose I must hasten to London with all speed, and as we go I will tell you all that I have learned, for I may need help and direction. I willingly trust to your honour to keep secret that which affects me in the business; but I must go to London directly, if the journey were to kill me—indeed, I wish it would."

"Nay, nay, Adair!" said Lacy, in a tone of remonstrance; "I thought that your mind was of too firm and

decided a character to give way thus, under any disappointment."

"He jests at scars who never felt a wound," replied Adair, shaking his head sadly; but then the next moment, he added, suddenly—"But we mistake each other! You are thinking of Helen, and perhaps fancy that I seek to go with you in the fond folly of wishing to gaze again upon the jewel I cannot obtain. Charles Lacy, the wound in my bosom is deeper than even that. I have been disappointed therein, deeply, bitterly, it is true—but it is disappointment that is over—done—gone for ever. It is a bubble broken on the stream of life—a dream vanished—a star, ay, and one of the brightest, fallen from the heavens of youth.—But, Helen—your Helen, Charles Lacy—that my conviction of her feelings should be full, thorough, and complete, she broke the golden staff of Hope in pieces at once, and left her not a fragment to lean upon. I am grateful to her—most grateful to her for it—for by so doing she changed all my feelings, gave them a new direction, and made me comprehend, that to see her happy, and to contribute to her happiness, might afford me a new object, free and detached from the misery of self. She has fixed her fate upon the love of a man that is worthy of her, and though the old wound may now and then give me a pang, yet on that score my mind is made up; and though I may not have the first great hope of making her happy myself, I might have the second, which is little inferior, to know that her happiness is secure; but that and every other source of joy is dried up in my bosom, Lacy, by news that I have heard since. As I have said, I have not time to tell you all now; but I will tell you as we go. Only give me half an hour's notice and I will be ready to set out."

Perhaps Lacy might entertain some suspicion of the nature of that information, which had produced so terrible an effect upon Henry Adair, for the tidings which his friend had given him on the preceding morning, had led his mind much farther, in regard to the conduct of Lord Adair, than the point at which filial affection had caused the imagination of his son to stop. However, he did not choose, of course, to express his own fancies upon the subject till they were confirmed, and he replied, "Well, Adair, it would be folly to offer you consolation upon griefs, the nature of which I do not know; but when you choose to explain to me what

you do feel, be assured that I will do all I can to advise and assist you judiciously ; and, remember, my dear fellow, there are many circumstances in which a single word of information, more or less, makes all the difference in the view of a particular case. Much may be done to justify, much may be done to palliate, by a single word of truth, which, suppressed, leaves an action of the blackest dye. But I speak at random, and only beg you to do nothing definite till you have well and maturely weighed it, and consulted with some one on whom you can rely."

They were now at the door of Adair's hotel, and merely wringing Lacy's hand, he left him, and went in. His servant almost instantly presented himself, with the waiter of the inn, to ask what he would have for dinner ; but Adair replied briefly, " Nothing ! " and motioned them to leave him.

It was now, perhaps, for the first time, that he fully felt all that was dreadful and agonizing in his situation ; no other feelings, no other ideas, interposed, and he could sit down and bend all his thoughts to the one terrible conviction, that his father had connived at one of the basest acts of villainy that could be committed, and might at any time be branded with public infamy, on account of the deed he had done. Some sons, perhaps, might have felt glad that the task and the power of working redress had fallen to their hands, instead of to strangers, and might, even with the best intentions, have calculated and considered the means of sheltering their own parent, in the first place, while they resolved upon doing justice to others afterwards ; they might have laid their plan to bargain for secrecy, and to buy off dis-honour with money. But the mind of Henry Adair was one which admitted no compromise, which could follow no tortuous path, which could adopt no temporising policy. All he could have wished, all he could have desired, was that the task had fallen to some other hands than his—to some one who would not have thought themselves degraded by bargaining to save his father's honour, and his name from disgrace, or that he himself had died before the discovery. As it was, however, he felt that to say a word before he did the act of justice to those who had been wronged, to ask the least engagement to secrecy ere he restored their rights, would, in some sort, implicate himself in the transaction, and render himself a sharer in the deed that he despised. No ; his determination was fixed at

once, to obtain the will from him who had so unjustly withheld it, to seek out Colonel Adair, and to place it in his hands without conditions. "I may then," he thought, "represent to him my feelings, and my anxiety to shield the last hours of my father's life from the world's contempt; and while I promise full restitution to the very last farthing, cast myself upon his generosity to save us from the pointed finger and the hissing tongue of scorn."

He sat long in painful, dreary thought—when I say long, I mean for more than one hour—till at length, a carriage rolling to the door, re-used him. Then came steps upon the staircase, approaching his apartments, and in a moment after, Lacy was announced, and entered, prepared for travelling. All was now hurry and confusion. The letter Adair had proposed to write was not written, none of his preparations had been made, and yet he was resolved to go. With the aid of Lacy, and his servant, some clothes and other things, were packed up, his proper passes were procured, and while his friend discharged the bill of the Auber-giste, and gave directions to his servant, to pack up the rest of his master's effects, and follow by the diligence, he himself wrote a few lines to Lord Adair, giving him the tidings of what had occurred, and breathing a part—though only a part—of the bitterness of his heart. He said :

"**MY FATHER,**

"By the confession of Ensign John Williamson, made to me on his bed of death, I learn that the will of your grandfather, conveying one moiety of his property to Colonel Adair, has been concealed by your lawyer, with your knowledge and consent. The young man, in remorse at some transactions in which he has been implicated, not only informed me of these facts, but put me in possession of the means of giving the will to the right person. You may conceive my feelings under these circumstances, but my conduct is determined: I set out to night for London to obtain the paper, and to give it at once to Colonel Adair. I must leave him to act as he thinks fit, but I will entreat him to spare us as much as possible, and doubt not that on full restitution being made, he will, for the honour of his family name, suffer silence to draw a veil over the occurrence I deplore. You had better furnish me instantly with full powers

to offer such restitutions, and address your letter to the care of Lord Methwyn, with whose son I travel to England."

Such were the only words which the manifold contending feelings in his breast suffered him to write, and having given strict charge to his servant to put the letter in the post the next morning, he followed Lacy into the carriage which that officer had bought for the occasion, and was soon rolling away towards London.

At first he cast himself back in the vehicle, pausing and hesitating as to how much he should tell his companion. The mind of the unhappy young man was never made for concealment of any thing. Too eager, too impetuous in all his feelings, to pause in long consideration of every step he took, and at the same time too noble and too pure in all his emotions, to fear the eye of any mortal resting upon the heart which was open to God, he had never accustomed himself to cast the slightest veil over his own actions. Nevertheless, in this matter, he feared, and he doubted for the first time in life, to give voice to the feelings and thoughts, that were busy in his bosom. His father's honour and reputation were at stake, and he paused, but still there were many motives combined to make him reveal to Lacy all that he had learned. In the first place his friend already knew a part, in the next place he was in some degree concerned. Then Henry Adair felt that unaccustomed to deal with knaves and villains, he might, where Williamson was concerned, require that clear good sense and knowledge of the world, that calm decision and commanding firmness, which he could find no where so fully combined as in Charles Lacy. Then again he remembered that he had promised to tell his companion of the whole, and that he was one of those men who can be placed in no circumstances wherein they will not keep their word, even to their own detriment.

He felt a difficulty, however, in beginning his tale, and, therefore, after he had again made up his mind to the complete disclosure, he remained silent for some time, revolving all the circumstances in his mind, and hesitating how to begin. Had Lacy even spoken a word, it would have relieved him, but Lacy too, had manifold feelings struggling in his own bosom, which were too strong for words. With him, the moment had now arrived, when all the difficulties and obstacles, which he had foreseen in the way of his union with Helen Adair, were to be encountered at once; when

his father's objections were to be removed, or at least combated, and when his fate was to be decided, as far as the will of any other person could affect it. At the same time, but one advantage had been gained, since he last contemplated those difficulties in London. Colonel Adair had distinguished himself highly in the field ; and in the rewards, which he knew would be showered liberally on all who merited them, he was sure that the old officer would not be forgotten. Nevertheless, by the rank which he might gain in the army his fortune would be but little improved, and Lacy knew his father too well to fancy that he would wave such considerations.

All these thoughts were still further perplexed by the uncertainty of Helen's situation, and chequered by the tidings which Henry Adair had learned from Adjutant Green concerning the will, which, had its provisions been properly executed, would have left no obstacle in the way of his happiness.

"And yet," he thought, "I am almost glad it never was known. Had Colonel Adair possessed that fortune, he would not have been a tenant of my father's, I should have never known Helen, in all probability ; and even had I known her, educated differently, and accustomed through life to scenes, and people, and feelings, so totally different from those she has hitherto known, she could hardly have been so charming in mind and manners as she now is, whatever she might have been in person."

In fact, in regard to Helen, Lacy, was an enthusiast, and he would not have had her, even in the slightest degree, different from what she was, for the most splendid fortune that ever woman possessed. Thus, then, he too remained in thought, while Henry Adair, on his part, paused and considered what was to be his future conduct, and the carriage rolled on towards Beauvais.

At length, working himself up, by constantly revolving all the facts in his mind, till he forgot totally that Lacy and himself had not been conversing over the matter all along, Henry Adair burst forth : "But suppose, Lacy, he should be in town and refuse to let us take the will.—Oh, but I forgot you do not know what I am speaking of, and I promised to tell you. Listen, then, and I will. But first, Lacy, promise me that in the matter which I am going to commit you upon, you will act with me in every thing, and

will not reveal any part of what I have discovered, without my consent—but I know you will—so there is no need to bind you by promises. What I have to say, Lacy, is very terrible to me—terrible to me even to think of, much more to speak about, but it must be done; and I must not only speak about it, but act upon it; and it is on that account I wish to ask you how I may act to the best advantage."

"Any advice or assistance I can give you, Adair," replied Lacy, "you may command, and be perfectly sure that any thing you tell me in confidence, shall be buried in my bosom, till such time as you require it to be revealed."

"Well, well, I will tell you all," answered Henry Adair. "It has almost driven me mad in turning it in my mind alone, and perhaps when it is spoken I shall feel some relief. You remember what I told you yesterday morning regarding my finding good old Colonel Adair and honest Charles Green on the field of Waterloo, and the story that Green told us about the will. Well, that unhappy fellow Williamson, on his death-bed, has given me a clear insight into the whole."—And Adair then proceeded to relate every thing which had occurred after that change of feeling had taken place which had succeeded in young Williamson to the delirium of the preceding night. He also informed Charles Lacy of his determination in regard to the will; and added, "You may easily conceive, Lacy, how terrible a stroke this has been upon me; how dreadful is the consciousness that my father could commit such an act; how painful is every step which I must take in exposing such a transaction; and yet, Lacy, it must be done, for no consideration upon earth shall induce me to pause one moment till that will is fully executed."

"In that you are quite right, Adair," replied Lacy, willing to do all he could to relieve his mind; "but it seems to me that you are distressing yourself unnecessarily, or, at all events, prematurely, in regard to your father. Here, all that you positively know is, that the will has been concealed by that scoundrel Williamson, and that it is still in his possession. There is no proof but the assertion of the villain himself to his little less rascally son, that your father was at all acquainted with the fact. Adjutant Green told you, I think, that he was not in the room when the last will was made, and amongst all the many probabilities which would tend greatly to modify your view of the case, is the chance of Williamson having in the first instance concealed

the fact that a new will was made, even from your father, till he had taken possession of the property and so entangled himself with the whole business, that it was difficult to recede. Such, and a thousand other suppositions might be brought forward, which would alter all the particulars, and yet the general fact be true. But at all events you have no right to assume that your father was any participator in the business, and still less to admit that such was the case to others, till you have some better proof than the bare word of a rascal, who is not to be believed upon his oath. Satisfy yourself with doing substantial justice; recover the paper, put it in the hands of Colonel Adair, and leave him or others to investigate, if they think fit, how it was so long concealed; but I do not think that he will judge it expedient to do so."

"Thank you, thank you, Lacy," cried Adair, turning round in the carriage, and grasping his hand with deep gratitude for the relief, that even a doubt of his father's culpability afforded him. "But let us now consider what are the first measures to be taken in regard to this Williamson?"

The consideration was difficult, and the consultation long; and when it was over, a break took place in their conversation. From weariness and exhaustion, Henry Adair fell asleep, and Lacy, of a stronger frame and more habituated to endure fatigue, leaned back and thought with joy of the extraordinary result of the scenes which we have lately described. He looked forward into the future, through the magic perspective glass of hope, and saw the last obstacle between himself and Helen Adair removed by the accidental discovery which had just taken place; and as the morning dawned with unusual brightness and splendour, he felt as if it were the herald of many happy days, the harbinger of joys to come. Oh, deceitful hopes! oh, vain anticipations! how idle is it in man to calculate the result of any one event which takes place throughout the whole of his stumbling, blindfold course!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE Newgate Calendar, that famed and most deserving book, which beyond any book that ever was written, contains sound instruction and useful information—for pickpockets, swindlers, housebreakers, and footpads,—which has even furnished the novelists, those literary thieves, with some good scenes, and has suggested to the poets many a valuable hint, will be found to contain in the history which it gives of the events of 1815, a far more full and particular account of the substance of this chapter, than the narrow limits of this tale will admit.

About half-past twelve o'clock at night, in the end of July, at one of those periods when no moon lights the noon of night, and when the streets of London,—all gasless and woe-begone, as they appeared in those days,—were as dark as the pit of Acheron, two men walked slowly up the right side of Hill Street, Berkeley Square. We leave two, and as far as possible deal in pairs, for odd numbers were only made for the affections of odd people and old maids; but still it must be acknowledged that these two men were coasted along upon the other side of the way by a third person, who, by the manner in which he eyed them, and hung upon their steps, seemed to have too close and sympathetic connexion with them not to form one of the company, and thus spoil the harmony of the numbers. Any one acquainted with music and slang will instantly perceive that harmony was very likely to be destroyed, when they are informed that the two first were decidedly flat, while the other was a sharp third. This sharp third, however—and we will drop metaphor, which, as a great Irishman justly insinuated, is in general but a bad substitute for good sense—was neither more nor less than using the other two personages for his own purposes. The manner in which they were used was as follows. They approached the door of what appeared to be a large, newly-fitted up empty house, a great deal more smart in its externals than the venerable smoke-coated mansions on either side of it; and looked first down to the bottom of the area, then up to the parapet of the roof. Not a light of any kind was visible, and in the window

of the next house might be seen a large printed bill, informing the public that it was to be let under the paternal auspices of a Gillow or a Robins. Having made this perquisition, the two gentlemen walked on to the corner of the next street, and looked both up and down, but not no one was apparent, except their friend on the other side of the way. In those days no comet-like police moved in their eccentric orbits through the streets of London, protecting the side-pockets of his majesty's lieges, and wrangling with old basket women who obstruct the king's highway; and close beside them, snug in an oaken box, reclined the peaceful watchman, who charmed the ear of night with the soft music of his sleeping nose. Having ascertained these facts, the two, the Orestes and Pylades of the night, returned to the house they had examined, and shook the area door. There was a renitency, however, about it, a spirit of resistance, which seemed disposed to make their efforts take the more ambitious way of mounting to their purpose, like many greater men, on the long rows of spear heads which surmounted the iron railings. This, however, they avoided, the one who had shaken the door dipping his hand into his pocket and bringing forth a crooked iron instrument, which, with soft persuasion, shook the resolution of the lock, and the area door swinging back, gave them easy means of descent. They soon disappeared from upper air, and while they held a secret conference at the door of the house, which opened into the area, the worthy, who had hitherto perambulated the other side of the way, crossed over, and passed up and down with a degree of rapidity which implied some apprehension and agitation affecting his inner man. All remained as calm and still, however, as the unnightmared slumber of a beggar's child; and, after five rapid turns, the good gentleman paused before the house, while a low voice addressed to him from what Hamlet would call the cellarage, saying the talismanic words, "All's right!" which,—though it often happens, contrary to their import, that "all's wrong," set so many wheels in motion in this good world wherein we live.

The moment his ear caught that sound, down he dived into the area, shutting the gate carefully behind; and, proceeding to a door which was comfortably concealed from observation under the steps, as if it had been made for the purpose of being broken open, he rejoined his two compa-

nions, one of whom, about six inches taller and nearly as many broader than himself, asked him, "What is to be done next?"

"Why, to the money-box and the plate-chest as fast as possible, Mr. William," replied the other; "the footman told me, as I told you, that the one was in the back-parlour, the other in the butler's pantry. Let us get a light and go up stairs first."

By peculiar contrivances of their own, a light was soon produced, and up the whole party marched, and entered a very splendid dining-room upon the ground floor, where the first longings of their cupidity fixed upon the drawer of a sideboard. But all had evidently been packed up before the family to whom the house belonged had quitted town, except one solitary silver crescent, fastened with a small chain, and inscribed with that mystic word so dear to the long absent sailor,—"Port!" This the little sharp gentleman instantly slipt into his pocket, and opening a very solid door on one side, they entered a room which ran off to the back of the house, and which, by a splendid writing-table, a smaller table for a clerk, a multitude of shelves covered with japanned tin boxes, painted with the words, "House of Lords," and manifold other signs and symptoms of business,—appeared to be, undoubtedly, the private room of an eminent lawyer. On either side of the fire-place, and on the side of the room next the door by which they entered, appeared the square, rough-featured face of a large iron chest built into the solid wall, and by the aspect of these solemn guardians of the gifts of mammon, the eyes of the triumvirate who had entered were fixed in evident awe and admiration.

"Now which the devil is the right one," cried the taller and more burly of the men; "if we could guess it would be better, for we may be kept here an hour opening all three."

"O sir!" replied the little one, "I've got here, in my pocket, a bunch of persuaders what will open any thing in that way, from a patent *Security* down to a common *Bray-may*."

Thus saying, he produced a small bundle of odd-shaped irons, with which he approached the box that stood solitary in the wall, between the office and the dining-room, and which he probably respected more highly than the others, from its keeping aloof at a proud distance from the rest.

One after another of his instruments did he apply to the key-hole, but without success, and having gone over them all again, he was in the very act of condemning his own eyes, in the usual set form of a disappointed blackguard, when something gave a click, and exclaiming, "I've catched it!" he threw the door wide open, exposing sundry drawers. The other gentlemen advanced, and held the light, and drawer after drawer was opened; but what was the disappointment of the whole party to find merely vacancy till they came to the last, which contained nothing but an old faded paper, tied with red tape. The big man of the party took it up, and examined it; but the little one exclaimed, "O damn it, Bill! it's nothing but some devilish law-paper; come along!"

"Well, well! it's a matter of some consequence, depend upon it" replied the other: it would not be here else, all alone in that cupboard; so I'll have it, my boy!" and he slipped it into his pocket.

They then proceeded to one of the other chests, near the side of the fire-place; but their booty was small, and disappointing. Half a-dozen of those really *flimsy* representatives of wealth, called one-pound notes, and one purporting to be worth five, were all in the shape of money that it contained. The other box, however, proved more productive, for in the lower drawer were found, snugly ensconced, a roll of those beautiful pieces, which we see not now, called guineas; which, in the plentiful lack of gold that then existed in Great Britain, many a careful gentleman saved up, whenever he could get hold of them, against a day of need. There might be about a hundred and fifty of these shining gentlemen in all; and with much satisfaction, the party of *exploratores* divided the spoil between them, and proceeded on their search. First, however, they carefully and judiciously shut up,—ay, and even locked,—the iron safes which they had opened, and thus left the room without any memorial of their presence, except a slight vacancy in one or two of the drawers which would not be soon detected.

They next marched direct upon the butler's pantry, which the "little 'un," as he was called, seemed to have studied topographically long before, and to which he now led his companions direct without any turning from his way. There stood two ponderous plate-chests, screwed to the

floor; but it was not either of the chests which the gentlemen, whose visit we commemorate, wanted on the present occasion, but merely the contents, their satisfaction was not in the least diminished by the screws and iron bands which guarded against the abstraction of the depositories. The locks yielded to the solicitation of the "little 'un," as unresistingly as those of the other chests had done, and there, in the midst of chamois leather and silver paper, appeared many a goodly article of solid silver, candlesticks, bread-baskets, salvers, spoons, ladles, tea-pots, coffee-pots, cream-jugs, salt-cellars, mustard-pots, and, in short, every other sort of pot, jug, or spoon, which the ingenuity of man has discovered and made, in silver, since the cynic threw away his ladle and went back to the original. The eyes of the three gentlemen, when they contemplated the inside of these plate-chests, grew rounder and more round, with that mixture of surprise and pleasure which has a tendency to expand the eyes and mouths of those who undergo its influence; and the "little 'un" addressed the larger of his two companions with, "I think, Bill, this here looks like a go."

"It does indeed," replied his companion; "but how are we to get all these heavy things away with us? why it would take a cart and horse to carry one half of them."

"Stop a bit! stop a bit!" answered the "little 'un," "and I'll put you up to it. We'll take all the smaller articles with us, do you see, for fear of accidents, you know. Then we can get the heavy things out into the back yard, and leave them there till we can get round by the mews and fetch them. There is nothing but a wall to get over there; and you, Bill, or lucky Tom, here, can match 'em for a bricklayer, and with a ladder and hod get over the wall, before it is well light, and fetch them away."

"No, no! I'll have nothing to do with that," replied the other; "I'll not do the bricklayer! I'm too well known, a great deal. Why the devil don't you do the bricklayer yourself, little 'un? Why no one would see you getting over the wall—you're so small."

"He's not got pluck for that," joined in lanky Tom, "Why he's only fit for fine work, Bill. No, I'll do the bricklayer, if it come to that. But I say, little 'un, you'll not be arter leaving them ere things shining out there in the yard; why, if we can't get un away afore day-light, we'll be nosed as sure as a gun."

"No, no, you fool!" replied the other; "I'll bet you a quartern that there are plenty of aprons and things in that ere drawer; we'll wrap 'em up in those, and then put 'em out in packets, such as you can carry away in a hod easy. Hark! What's that?"

They all listened, and heard the voice of the old watchman chirping "Past one o'clock and a cloudy morning," as he went by the house. The two lanterns were instantly shaded, lest he should see a light through the chinks of the shutters; and, knowing that the house was not inhabited, for the time being, by its usual tenants, he should think it right to inquire who were the present inmates. The old gentleman walked deliberately on, however, singing the same unvarying song; and as soon as he had proceeded on his beat, the personages we have mentioned commenced the work of packing up, and with aprons and glass cloths, which they found in abundance, enveloped the various articles of plate, arranging them as neatly and tidily, the one within the other, as ever did shopman in the gold and silver dwellings of Rundel, Hamlet, or Gray.

This part of the operation, indeed, was performed by the positive and comparative degrees of the nouns present; the superlative, or big Bill, was not at all inclined to show his dexterity in packing plate; and, on the contrary, opening the doors which led out to the back yard, he prepared a passage for it, when it should be packed. As the easiest means, or rather the quickest means, of ascent and descent, a ladder which he found in what was called the laundry, was placed from the little back area—into which one of the windows of a room contiguous to the butler's pantry looked—up to the yard where the plate was to be deposited; and by this, as it was packed, big Bill carried up the shining ore, and stowed it safely in one corner, under the shade of two high walls, where it was little likely to be seen by any but a most inquiring eye.

All this, however, occupied some time, and the hour of half past one had arrived—though the watchman neglected to call it—ere one half of the silver had been placed in what was deemed the proper position for it to occupy during the next three or four hours. It was at that precise moment of time that the creaking of some hinges made the whole party lift their heads, and gaze upon the door which led into the pantry, where they were occupied; and certainly the Echi-

mades were less surprised and terrified at the wrathful aspect of Achelous, when they had forgotten to invite him to their sacrifice, than were our friends over the plate-chests, at the appearance of three or four faces very familiarly known in Bow Street.

The lanterns were dashed to the ground in a minute, and all was darkness; but, nevertheless, the unfortunate "little 'un," though he in general took pains to leave the dangerous part of his scrapes to other people, was now grabbed in a minute. Lanky Tom, with a small crow-bar in his hand, attempted to break through the phalanx of officers, and showing fight, stoutly occupied the posse at the end of the pantry; while big Bill dashed through the door which led into the adjoining room, in order to make his escape by the window through which he had carried so much of the plate. Two of the officers, however, had run round by the other door, and one met him in the teeth; but a single blow of big Bill's powerful fist, planted in the thief-catcher's face, while he took the stroke of a cutlass on his left arm, levelled the first officer with the ground, and left him with a broken jaw. The other was farther off, near the door, and Bill sprang at once upon the table and up to the window. The officer saw that he could not catch him; but as the house-breaker's burly figure darkened the aperture of the window, his pursuer drew a pistol from his coat and fired. A loud execration followed, and Bill rolled forward into the area, which was on a level with the flooring of the room. The next moment, however, he was upon his feet again, and the officer only reached the window in time to see him spring up the ladder as nimbly as ever, draw it up after him, and cross the yard.

He ran up, nevertheless, by the stairs, and with some difficulty unlocked the door and made his way out; but big Bill had been before him, and nothing was to be seen of him for a moment. The instant after, however, the officer saw his shoulders appearing again, as he climbed over the wall of the next yard, which led to the mews; and though the distance was great, he took his chance, and gave him the contents of his second pistol. It was in vain, however, for without appearing injured, the man ran along the wall, and then jumped down into the mews. A number of the watch and patrol had by this time collected, and running out by the street door, the officer put them upon the track

of the fugitive, sending some to either end of the mews; and then, feeling sure that his first shot had taken effect, he returned to his companions in the house, not doubting that the other would be overtaken ere he could run far.

On entering he found that the business below was by this time settled. Lanky Tom and the "little 'un" were rendered peaceable and handcuffed, and more lanterns having been procured, several of the police proceeded to search the premises, not choosing to trust to the word of the two gentlemen on whom they had laid their clutches, and who assured them that no one else was engaged in the business except themselves and the gemman who had got away. His name they wisely forbore to mention, but as we have said, the officers proceeded on their search, and found nothing but the plate piled up in the yard, and unequivocal proof, from the quantity of blood which for some way marked his track, that the housebreaker who had escaped, had been severely wounded by the pistol shot which the officer had given him. Returning then to the "little 'un," and lanky Tom, they endeavoured, by all those means which Bow-street officers understand so well how to apply to induce them to disclose the names of their accomplices. They held out hopes to men whom they knew to be overwhelmed with deadly fears; yet did so without so far committing themselves as to render those hopes binding as promises. They excited expectations as far as they dared; but they had to do, however, with two experienced hands, who were not to be taken in. The one was a dogged and determined thief of long practice and good repute in the profession; and the other, called the little 'un, was a sharp and cunning little villain, who had shared in more exploits, where others were hanged and he escaped, than perhaps any other person in the annals of Newgate. All questions to Lanky Tom were answered by a sullen pertinacious, "You be d——d! Do you think I'm such a sneaking —— as to peach?" And when the soft insinuations were addressed to the other, he replied, "Why, Lord, Mr. Ruthven, you know very well, and I knows too, that I weighs my weight; what's the use of getting another young man into trouble, and his first crack job too. He may have taken a thinble or so—I don't say but he have—but still he's nothing like my weight, arter all. Howsomdever, you know if you'll give

word and honour that I may turn evidence—why that'll make a difference."

"Why, d—n you, you're not going to peach, little 'un" cried his comrade; but the officer answered, without noticing the interruption, "Why, you know I cannot promise that, when you say there's but one of them. If there were two or three, now—"

"Ay, but there is only one," answered the other; "and so it's no use. I knowed that well enough; so let us get on, Master Ruthven; for if you keep us here much longer, it will be morning, and then we shall have the boys at our heels; and I hope you intend to treat us gentlemanlike."

Such may be the notions of delicacy in a thief.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE little scene which we have given in the last chapter, without adding any of those particulars whereby, as in the manner of books, the gentle reader might attach it to the other parts of this history, has been purposely left alone, that it might stand as a perfect and complete whole, and be gazed at with that separate and individual admiration which it well deserves. That it was in some manner connected with our story, however, the reader has, we presume, conceived a shrewd suspicion, and confirmed himself therein by asking himself the question, why it should be put in this book if it had nothing to do with it. The reader is right, and the manner and method, end and object of its connexion with all that has gone before, and all that is to follow after, will be at once obvious and apparent when it is acknowledged and declared that the house entered and robbed in the manner and at the time aforesaid was no other than the house of John Williamson, Esq. attorney-at-law.

But here we shall drop all reference to that robbery whatsoever, and beg leave to present our readers with another picture—the picture of one of the most miserable human beings that it is possible to conceive. Let man exercise his imagination to the uttermost, let him seek for and find out all the deepest shades of human misery, let him combine the several features at will, and darken the whole picture with the gloomiest shadows that fancy can cast over suffer-

ing, and he will find nothing more dark, cheerless, and wretched, throughout the whole universe, than the picture of a villain's heart when his schemes of villainy are disappointed, and the toils that he spread for others are first found to be encircling himself. Every other state of sorrow has some alleviation. Hope—if not of this world, at least of a better, comes to all other misery, and gives a drop of water to the parched and burning lip. Conscious innocence supports those who suffer unjustly, and deeds that we have not wrought ourselves, have but half the sting when they bring woe upon our heads, that those possess in which we have had a share. Loss of fortune, disappointed expectation, the falling off of friends, the treachery of those we trusted, the death of those we love, have all some softening balm to heal the wounds they leave; but dark as night without a star, deep as the ocean which seamen's lead has never fathomed, infinite as space, endless as eternity, is the misery of him who, to disappointment and privation, adds self-condemnation and the despair of conscious, unrepenting crime.

Such, and in such a state, sat the man whom we have called Williamson, in his own house, some four days after the robbery which we have commemorated. The cup of his wretchedness was very nearly full, though there was still a drop to be added to it, for as yet he knew not of his son's death; but still the bitter potion trembled near the brim, for he had already seen all his schemes failing, and, as we know, had already lost all those gains which the agency of Lord Methwyn's estates had formerly bestowed. He had foreseen, even at Brussels, that the timidity of Lord Adair, and the unexpected meeting together of so many persons, whom he had long kept apart, might ultimately end in his total ruin; and he had next been thwarted in the bold rash scheme, which he had devised for averting that catastrophe by marrying his son to Helen Adair. Since we last saw him, however, he had taken one more step in the same course, and that step had but brought down upon him fresh calamity and shame. He had, in consequence of his son's letter, returned from England, whither he had proceeded in the first instance, to Calais, in order to make one more effort with regard to Helen; but Lacy had already obtained news of her probable destination, from the French officer he had taken—had communicated that news to Mary Denham; through her it had reached Colonel Adair, and though yet

but half recovered, he had set out for Calais, and found his child in safety. A caning, such as man had seldom met with, was the first greeting which the lawyer received in Calais from Colonel Adair, for though the veteran officer could ~~not~~ walk very easily, he could stand firm ; and from ~~the~~ moment he caught hold of the scoundrel's collar he ceased not to chastise him as long as he could strike a blow.

So terribly was he beaten, that for several days he was forced to keep his bed, but as soon as he could move he slunk out of Calais and hurried over to England, doubtful how to act or what to do, for some words had fallen from Colonel Adair, in the midst of his wrath, which showed the wiley lawyer that the secret of the will had transpired, and he now sat brooding over the bitter past, and resolving in his own mind many an impotent scheme of treachery, deceit, and revenge, and longing to wreak his hatred upon those whom he had most injured.

Whichever way he looked he saw nothing but despair except when he turned toward revenge, and already he had laid one train from which he hoped to derive that last, deepest, keenest gratification of an evil heart. His first thought, indeed, had been to burn the will on which his fate depended, and then to set the world at defiance, secure that those he feared could prove no positive act against him. It had been the means of vengeance against Colonel Adair, too, which had first suggested itself to his mind ; and he had not been so foolish, as his son thought, to leave himself with only one key to the place which contained so important a document. But when he came home and found that his house had been broken into, and partly robbed, he paused not till he had examined well each iron-chest, when, in the two next the fire-place, he discovered the defalcation of a few guineas, but in the other discovered the place void, which had so long been tenanted by that important paper.

Who can express his feelings when he made that discovery, and farther ascertained from the Bow-street officers, that one of the house-breakers had escaped, and that no paper of any kind had been found upon the other two ! The paper was gone, that was evident—a glance would show its vast import to the person into whose hands it had fallen, whosoever he might be—what might be the use he would

make of it, no one could tell. How many chances were there that the person who possessed it would find out Colonel Adair, and for a stipulated sum place in his hands the documents which had been purloined. On the other hand it might be still worse, if the thief should be caught. Then the paper would be produced before a body of ~~magistrates~~, irrefragable proof would be afforded that he was the person who had concealed it, and that it had remained in his possession—in his, who had drawn it up, who had witnessed it, who knew its whole contents, and who was bound to see it put in force. Destruction stared him in the face—there was but one ray of hope—there seemed but one way of escape—to overwhelm the man he had already injured—to strive, by means scarcely short of felony, to ruin, to degrade him, to break his heart in his old age, before the discovery could be made, and at the same time to seek out by any plan that the cunning of the London police might suggest, the person who had taken the paper, and to buy it from him again at whatever price might be demanded.

Thus did he propose, with the usual blind folly of crime, to go stumbling on, piling offence after offence upon his own head, and still adding one black act more to hide those which had gone before. But Mr. Williamson was not permitted to go more than a single step forward in the way he had chalked out for himself, as will soon be shown; but we must relate our tale in the order of the events themselves.

He had returned to London then, had made the discoveries which we have mentioned, had determined and taken the first measure in the onward course, which he proposed to himself to follow, and had passed a sleepless night in the feverish agony of crime struggling against fate. Every thing round him had looked desolate and wretched; his house empty and dirtied by the feet of thieves and officers, without any attendant but a charwoman, without society, without friends, and with no occupation but the bitter business of his own thoughts and evil purposes.

During the morning of the second day, however, two of his own servants, for whom he had sent, arrived from the country; his house assumed a more cheerful appearance, he took measures to insure that one part of his plan should succeed, and he sat down to an early dinner with some ~~gape~~ of appetite, proposing to proceed, immediately after the

meal, in order to follow up the blow he had already struck. At the moment, however, when his wine, of which he had been taking a more than usual quantity, was again put upon the table after the cloth had been removed, a thundering knock was heard at the street-door, and the servant ran to open it.

The lawyer was seated in that back room which he usually employed as a sort of office, but in which he also dined, when alone; and therefore not being able to see the carriage, or whatever it might be, which brought the visitors, and feeling a degree of hope reviving in his bosom, he bade the servant admit them, if they seemed gentlemen. The next minute Mr. Adair and Captain Lacy were announced, and though, perhaps, no two names could have been chosen more disagreeable to the ear of Mr. Williamson, yet he could not do otherwise than abide the infliction. Summoning up, therefore, all the dogged resolution of his nature, he rose and met his unwished for guests with sulky civility, bowed to Lacy, and attempted to shake hands with Henry Adair. That ceremony the young gentleman, however, avoided, and pointing to seats, Mr. Williamson congratulated both upon their safe return to England, especially Captain Lacy, he said, who had been exposed to all the fury of a battle such as Europe had seldom seen before; and he ended by asking when they had arrived.

"We arrived about three hours ago," replied Lacy, "towards mid-day, and having dispatches to deliver, I paused at the Horse Guards, otherwise we should have been with you earlier, Mr. Williamson, as our business lies principally with you."

"Very happy, gentlemen!" replied the lawyer, "very happy to transact any business either with you or for you; you find me at dinner at an unseasonable hour; but I had much to do in the afternoon, and wished to get dinner over first. Smith, put glasses on the table. This Madeira is very choice, gentlemen."

"I never drink Madeira," replied Lacy, "nor any wine in the morning!" and Henry Adair making a reply of a similar nature, the servant, who had lingered about the dessert, withdrew and closed the door. Henry Adair then looked for a moment to Lacy, and Lacy replied by a slight nod, all of which caused the lawyer to move uncomfortably on his chair, by showing him that the business on which the

two young gentlemen came, was both serious and unpleasant.

Henry Adair, however, went on. "Mr. Williamson," he said,—proceeding, as usual with him to the matter of his thoughts at once,—"Mr. Williamson, I come to you on two subjects; but to speak of one at a time, and to begin with the least painful first, I find that for twenty years or more you have been in possession of my great grandfather's last will, while my father has been using and enjoying a considerable portion of the property he possesses, under a previous will. I am furnished with proof of the fact, sir, under your son's voluntary declaration, and with the key of that iron chest in which it is contained, and I now come, in presence of an honourable witness, to demand it at your hands."

"Sir!" said Mr. Williamson, taken by surprise for a moment, and assuming habitually an air of insolence, "Sir—sir! this is a very extraordinary proceeding—very extraordinary indeed, and I should certainly—"

"You should certainly do nothing without considering it well, Mr. Williamson," replied Lacy. "Pause a moment, and reflect, my good sir. You will find that we are neither people to be bullied by any one, nor likely to be deceived by any thing but very consummate skill. Two of the witnesses to the will are now living, and in London, and you yourself are the third; we have your son's own declaration under his own hand, together with the whole history of the business, and the motives and purposes, on account of which you put that key in his possession. There is no possibility of evasion, Mr. Williamson, and the consequences to yourself will very much depend upon whether you do with a good grace that which you must do ultimately."

Lacy had given the lawyer time to reflect while he spoke, but the result was very different from what Lacy imagined. In that time, Williamson had quite recovered himself, and saw clearly all the advantages of his own situation. He was not a man to acknowledge his guilt till the last moment, and he determined to grapple with the accusation directly.

"Captain Lacy," he said, "I neither wish, as you dare to insinuate, sir, to bully or to deceive any one, but I reply as I did before, that this conduct of yourself and your friend here is extraordinary, very extraordinary indeed. I

know nothing of the document which you speak of. The late Lord Adair did, indeed, make some arrangements on his death-bed, and caused me to draw up some papers to which we procured the attestation of two or three witnesses, but those papers were of a totally different nature from what you suppose. I never heard of such a will, gentlemen, and as to what was told you by my son John, the boy must have been jesting."

"He was in no situation to jest, sir," replied Henry Adair; "and besides, he would not have carried the jest so far, even if he had jested, as to give me this key to the iron case, where the paper is, authorising me, under his own hand, to take that paper, and telling me exactly how he possessed it.

"The boy must have been lying then, sir," replied the lawyer. "He always was a liar, you know, Mr. Henry; when you were at school with him, he was a desperate liar. All I can say is, I know nothing of the paper you speak of. Did I possess it, I certainly should not give it up to you, because neither of you gentlemen have any legal right, that I know of, to require a document affecting property that does not belong to you: but as I said before, I do not possess it." And assuming a tone of candour and fairness which was so completely unnatural to him, that no one who had enjoyed his acquaintance long and intimately could be taken in by it, he proceeded, "However, gentlemen, as I have now had the honour of an acquaintance with you for some years, and—whatever may have occurred unpleasant, between your father and myself, sir—have still a great respect both for him and you sir, I will do every thing to satisfy you in this matter."

Lacy inclined his stately head coldly to the lawyer's expression of respect, not looking upon the extorted reverence of rogues as a highly gratifying tribute. "I am afraid, Mr. Williamson," he replied, "that the only thing which could satisfy us would be the examination of that chest.—We certainly do not intend to search it by force; but merely wish, in case you decline to produce the paper, to have your formal and distinct refusal to open and examine before us the box in which your son positively declared the will was to be found."

"As to the paper, sir," replied Williamson, assuming a tone of sharp impatience, "I cannot produce it, for as I told

MY AUNT

"... I do not possess it, and never heard of it till
yesterday. Now, then, sir, if my son has given you the
key, you have authority to open it. You may do so with all
confidence. It is in his own chest. I gave it to him to keep
safe, and to consider it concerning the little farm I made over to
him. I do not think he is a careless rascal, but I do not know whether there be any thing in
the box, but open it, gentlemen, open it, and satisfy yourselves. I know nothing about what it may contain—mind
me, if you find the will you speak of, it is my son's busi-
ness not mine. I have nothing to do with it."

Henry Adair made no reply, but at once rose from his
seat, and approaching the chest put the key into the lock.
It fitted exactly, the lock turned and the heavy iron door
moved back.

"Well, Captain Lacy, let us come and see what it con-
tains," said Mr. Williamson, rubbing his hands; "I am as
much in ignorance as you are."

Lacy and the lawyer approached, and drawer after drawer
was opened and examined by Henry Adair, but all were
void, and not a vestige of paper or document of any kind
was to be found, except a ticket recording the name of the
maker of patent iron fire-proof safes for the preservation of
property from covetous men, or the devouring element.

Henry Adair looked at Charles Lacy, and Charles Lacy
for a moment bent his eyes upon the ground, but raising
them the next moment somewhat suddenly to Mr. Williamson's face, he said, "I think I saw in a newspaper at the
office that your house had been broken into and robbed, Mr.
Williamson; is it true?"

Charles Lacy intended Mr. Williamson to blush or betray him-
self by a look, he very very sadly miscalculated. He might
as well have expected an old brown copper halfpenny of
the time of James the Second to redden under the prying
gaze of the antiquary who is busy in mistaking it for an
ancient coin. Mr. Williamson neither coloured nor looked
in any way but that which he determined to look; but, put-
ting on an appearance of anger, he said—"Yes, sir, yes!
It is true, quite true—my house has been robbed—but,
good God, nobody has attempted to rob me of my charac-
ter as a-day. I understand what you mean, sir—but you
are mistaken. If you will read that paper, sir, pasted in
the inside of the box, you will see those safes have locks

which cannot be opened, and I will show you, sir, in order that you may do me justice another time, that the other boxes at least have not been opened, and taking forth his bunch of keys, he unlocked both the other chests, exposing to view a great mass of papers, and exclaiming, "There, sir! there! there they are just as I left them. The plate chests indeed"—he recollects them at that moment—"the plate chests indeed are not by the same maker, as it is not necessary to take such precautions with articles that can be purchased over again, as with invaluable documents like these. But none of these chests can be opened by any but the proper key, and so now, gentlemen, I hope that you feel you have done me wrong, and owe me an apology."

"No, Mr. Williamson, I cannot say that I do," replied Lacy, very calmly. "Neither myself nor my friend Adair have acted in this business upon any thing but full and sufficient grounds. He has spoken to you of information derived from your son, and he had better, in our own support, read you the assignment which your son made of that box, and all that it contained, to him, which, connected with the story which your son told of the concealment of the paper, and with the testimony of my servant, William Newton, and of Adjutant Green, to the will having been made, fully justify us in the conduct we have pursued, and in the still farther steps which we shall of course institute."

"That's as you please, that's as you please," replied Mr. Williamson. "My son, sir, is a fool, and I am sorry to say, a liar. Adjutant Green, sir, may be a very honest man, but I will swear he was not in the room when the paper which he witnessed, and which was no will at all, was dictated by Lord Adair. The same applies to your servant, sir, Newton, if he be your servant, for him I have never heard of since—but my son is a liar, an egregious liar, not to be believed upon his oath. Well sir, read the paper, it is the one I gave him, I see, when I gave him that chest to contain his papers—I remember it well."

"It is signed at Brussels, however, on the morning of the 15th of June," said Henry Adair, "and therefore implies that at that time there were some contents in—"

But here he was vehemently interrupted by Mr. Williamson, who had been looking over his shoulder. "That is not my son's handwriting, sir! that at the bottom of the

paper—I do not know whose it may be, but that is not my son's."

"It is your son's, sir," replied Henry Adair, "for I saw him write it; and if you will read the attestation of the surgeon's assistant, you will see that it was owing to the state in which he was at the time that his hand is so unlike that which he usually wrote."

"Surgeon's assistant! state at the time!" cried Mr. Williamson, with a complete and for once unaffected change taking place in the expression of his countenance. "What do you mean, Mr. Adair? In the name of heaven what do you mean? I know that he fought and was taken prisoner at Quatre Bras, but he was not even wounded, for I have had two letters from him since. State he was in—surgeon's assistant—sir, you alarm and agitate me much."

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Williamson," replied Henry Adair, "that nothing which I have to tell you on the subject is calculated to allay your fears or decrease your agitation. On the contrary, all I have to communicate either on this or any other subject, is of a distressing and painful nature."

"Speak, speak, sir," cried the lawyer, in dreadful agitation, "anything but suspense! Tell me what has happened!—You have called him out," he added suddenly, "about that girl—you have shot him—a father's curse upon you! Ah, ah! young man, you have made yourself a murderer!"

"You mistake," replied Henry Adair, to whom he addressed his passionate adjuration, "I am no murderer nor duellist either. I abhor and hate, and despise and scorn the barbarous, idiotical, cowardly practice as much as any one; but your son, Mr. Williamson," he added, returning to the subject, and wishing to break the truth to him by degrees, "your son met with a severe accident just before that paper was signed. A horse that he had hired and was about to drive a short distance out of Paris ran away with him, and he was taken up seriously injured—very seriously injured."

Mr. Williamson rang the bell violently. "I will go directly!" he cried, "I will go directly. Order a post chaise and horses this moment!" he continued, as the servant, who had kept as close to the door as servants generally do when any thing important is going on, appeared

with somewhat suspicious promptitude ; “ Order a post-chaise and horses directly ! Don’t you hear ? ”

“ Mr. Williamson, you had better pause a moment,” said Lacy, making a sign to the servant to quit the room. “ Hear what my friend Adair has to tell you ! Your journey to Paris at this moment would be unnecessary ! ”

“ Then he is dead ! ” cried the lawyer, “ then he is dead ! God of heaven ! he for whom I have been toiling and thinking, and planning and scheming all my life, whom I thought to see a great man, and wealthy and happy, to die in this way. He is dead, he is dead ! ” and the large bitter drops of parental sorrow rolled from those keen and searching eyes over his red, coarse cheeks, while casting himself down in a chair he buried his face in his hands, and groaned in the agony of the disappointed heart. “ You say nothing ! ” he said, looking up to Lacy and Henry Adair, “ you do not deny it; he is dead. Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen, this is terrible indeed ! ”

“ I had hoped, Mr. Williamson,” said Lacy, “ that in sending your son to battle, you had prepared your mind to lose him, if such should be the will of God. I had trusted that you strengthened your heart to bear such a loss as is likely to befall every parent who has a child in the army.

“ If he had died in battle, sir, I should not have felt it half so much,” replied the lawyer; “ but to die thus, when I thought him safe and all danger over—to die without honour or fame when he had passed through the bloody ordeal of war unscathed—to die thus, to die thus, mangled and tortured ! O my poor boy, my poor boy ! ” And again the father overpowered every other feeling, and he wept bitterly and long. “ Leave me, gentlemen,” he said, at length, looking up, “ leave me, I beseech you. I am not fit for any business, and I think you would not have the cruelty to urge me further, upon such a matter as that which brought you here, at a moment like this. If you have, take all my keys, examine every thing you can find, turn the house out of the windows, if you please; but disturb not a father’s grief mourning for the untimely fate of his first-born son.”

It is hardly necessary to say that neither Lacy nor Adair availed themselves of the words of the unhappy lawyer to examine further; but after endeavouring to afford him some consolation they left him, resolving to take counsel with

Colonel Adair upon the course to be pursued ere they proceeded to any ulterior measures. "We shall now most likely find my father returned to dress for dinner," said Lacy, as they got into the carriage, "and you must, of course, make our house your home during your stay in London, Adair."

Henry Adair however declined, saying that he much preferred fixing his abode at Limmers'; "I shall see you as often as will be pleasant to you, Lacy," he said, "but now let the carriage drive first to Conduit-street, for I am anxious for an hour or two of solitary thought. I will join you before two hours are over."

Lacy offered no opposition, as he felt that Henry Adair was actuated by his own feelings and not by any false delicacy; and after having set him down at the hotel, he himself proceeded to Portman-square.

CHAPTER XV.

CHARLES LACY was very much surprised to see that his father's servants were not at all surprised at the unannounced fact of his return to London; for giving way to the eager and impetuous spirit of Henry Adair, he had proceeded at once, on their arrival, to the door of the house of John Williamson, Esq., attorney-at-law, before he went anywhere else whatever, except to the great stone building called the Horse Guards. He naturally expected, therefore, to see eyes wide open, and nostrils expanded, upon his sudden appearance; but on the contrary, the porter at once threw the door wider than ordinary, in order to admit trunks and packages; and two of the other servants came out and began to aid his own servant in unloading, without giving a glance to himself as he entered the house. The butler, who had come up also, being an old servant, ventured to congratulate his young master upon his escape from all the perils and dangers of war; and added, that Lord Methwyn had desired his son might be informed, on his arrival, that he would be detained half-an-hour later than usual ere he could come home to dinner. The men could not tell, however, how their Lord had obtained information of their young master's return, and Lacy was therefore obliged to wait

patiently for his father's arrival. When that event took place, the peer shook him very cordially by the hand, and talked to him of the battle of Waterloo, keeping up a running fire of question and answer all the way as he walked on to his dressing room, followed by his son and his valet.

At length, when his father made a moment's pause, Lacy interposed his question, saying, "So, sir, I find you expected me! Pray how did you hear of my being about to come over?—I did not know that I should be able to manage it myself, till six or eight hours before I set out."

"I expected you either to-day or to-morrow," replied the peer, in a quiet, equable tone; "to-day, or to-morrow, or the next day—the day before, or the day after, Charles, as the almanacs have it: and I gained the tidings accidentally from two sources. First of all, Lady Pontypool called here this morning, and we had a long conference. She knew of your intended coming—how she did know I did not inquire."

"Oh, I wrote to Mary in regard to my intention," replied Lacy, "but that was only if I could get leave, or despatches, or something; but I had no idea that my good aunt Pontypool was likely to come over herself. Has she left Mary at Brussels, then?"

"Oh, no!" replied Lord Methwyn, "Lady Mary is here in town, arrived late last night,—with her husband Major, now Colonel Kennedy, dreadfully wounded, poor fellow, and not yet able to cross the room without assistance. However, his wounds have got him a very pretty little wife with a splendid fortune. From what I hear there is as yet no settlements, but that we must see to. However you made a great mistake there, Charles—a very great mistake indeed. But there is no use in talking about matters that are irremediable, and so, to go on, I heard of your having set out actually, from a gentleman of the name of Green, who was inquiring for you this morning, when I was going out. He thought you and Mr. Henry Adair must have arrived, as he said Lord Adair knew of your departure from Paris when he, this Mr. Green, left Brussels. He seemed very anxious indeed to see you, but did not tell me what he wanted. A very gentlemanlike sort of person he appears to be."

"He has distinguished himself very much in the service," replied Lacy, "and raised himself from the ranks by merit and courage. We were detained at Calais four-and-twenty

hours by bad weather, which prevented the packets from sailing. That is the cause of my being later than might have been expected. Did Lady Pontypool give you no news?" he added, not a little suspicious of the worthy lady's proceedings.

"Oh dear, yes!" She gave me a great deal of news indeed!" replied Lord Methwyn, drily, "but we will talk about that after dinner, Charles. I never like to derange my gastronomic anticipations by anything disagreeable, and therefore, although I know a word between you and me will settle the whole quite satisfactorily, yet we will not talk upon any business at present. In the meantime, tell me—I wish, Lauzum, you would get some other millefleur, I told you so yesterday. That is abominable, it smells like a shop. Tell Delcroix that he must have made some mistake to send me such stuff as that.—In the meantime tell me, Charles, why have you not brought young Adair with you?—I should have been very happy to see him, you know."

"I took upon me to say so," replied Lacy, "but he is both fatigued to death, and a good deal agitated by some business he has had to do of a very painful nature, and therefore preferred dining at Limmers', and taking an hour or two's repose; but he will be here in the course of the evening."

"I hope so," said Lord Methwyn, "though the news I have to tell him is not very good. I had it from that Mr. Green, who seemed as anxious to see him as to see you. His father had been taken violently ill after receiving a letter from his son then in Paris; and Mr. Green said he feared he would die. A very gentlemanlike person that Mr. Green; if I had been sure you would arrive to-day I would have asked him to meet you at dinner."

Lacy smiled at the fancy which his father seemed to have taken for honest Adjutant Green, the most opposite man in the world to himself, and shortly after, dinner having been announced, father and son proceeded to the dining-room, though it must be acknowledged that Lacy's appetite was somewhat deadened by his father's quiet hint in regard to Lady Pontypool, as he never felt certain of what mischief that excellent lady might not commit with the best intentions in the world; and feared that the business between himself and Lord Methwyn might not be brought so easily or so soon to a conclusion as the peer presupposed. However,

all things pass : and whether a dinner be eaten or not, there comes a time when it is taken away. Lacy ate very little ; his father did tolerably, and proceeded in no degree the more rapidly because his son sat uneasy and impatient to hear all the news which Lady Pontypool had brought over with her to the shores of England. He partook of the soup, and the fish, and the rôti, in moderate portions, and even trifled for a moment with one of the unhappy and neglected side-dishes ; but at length the process was over, the clear mahogany shone in the light of the declining sun, and bright decanters saw themselves reflected in the brown mirror spread out beneath their feet.

“ I hear that old Colonel Adair has behaved most gallantly,” said Lord Methwyn, suddenly laying his hand upon the handle of the claret-jug.

Lacy thought, in his inward heart, that the commencement was not so bad as might have been expected, and he replied, “ Nobody more, sir ; the Duke, I understand, has especially marked his services for the attention of his Majesty.”

“ So I saw—so I saw,” replied Lord Methwyn ; “ he was here this morning, but, unfortunately, I was out. He wished to see me particularly, he said.”

“ Colonel Adair ?” asked Lacy, in as quiet a tone as he could command in the whole diapason.

“ Yes,” answered his father, “ Colonel Adair I mean—I did not refer to either the King or the Duke.”

Now Lacy had the strongest inclination in the world to ask if Miss Adair were with her father, but he felt and knew that he could not put that question as a man asks if it rains, or what o’clock it is. He felt there would be a little agitation of voice, a falling of the tone, a harring over some words, and a dwelling upon others,—all of which would be confirmed, explained, and rendered intelligible, by an eagerness of the eye, an expansion of the fine nostril, a trembling, perhaps, of the lip, usually so firm and decided ; and upon all these considerations, he thought it would be rash to venture. He therefore took a middle position, and asked where Colonel Adair was to be found, resolving to satisfy himself with regard to Helen with his own eyes.

“ He left his address as No. 160, or 70, Piccadilly,” replied Lord Methwyn ; “ but William, my groom, can tell exactly, for he took a note for me to the old gentleman. He

wished to see me, and I appointed two o'clock to-morrow; but I was rendered desirous, in the first place, to settle the base of our conference from what I had heard from my Aunt Pontypool in the morning."

Lacy perceived that the matter must be brought to an issue; and as his father kept skirmishing at a distance, unwilling to fire the first gun, he determined that he would, and therefore asked at once, "Well, and what news did my Aunt Pontypool bring?"

"Why, Charles," replied Lord Methwyn, leaning himself a little back in his chair, with a half smile upon his countenance, as if what he were about to tell were amongst the pleasant things of this world,—"Why, Charles, the news greatly concerns you, my dear fellow. I do not know on what story the old expression of 'letting the cat out of the bag' is founded, but certainly no one ever possessed the faculty of doing so more than our good Aunt Pontypool. She was here this morning, actuated by the very laudable and pious purpose of persuading me that the very best thing for you, in every respect, would be to marry that pretty little creature, Helen Adair. Now, Charles, I see very clearly that you have been doing as I foresaw you would, and have gone on flirting with Miss Adair till it is difficult to retreat. But it is lucky for you young men when you have a father behind your hand, who is willing to act the part of a friend as well as a father to you, and to get you out of any of these little scrapes, as fast as you get yourself into them. I therefore determined at once to take all the responsibility on myself, and consequently wrote to Colonel Adair, telling him that it was an arrangement which I could not hear of for one moment. Now do not be alarmed, Charles, or look so vexed; I did not act harshly in the least—I wrote in the most kind and polite tone that you can conceive. I told him that I was sure his own feelings would quite confirm mine upon the subject, spoke in the highest terms of the young lady, and said that from all I had had the pleasure of seeing of himself, I was perfectly convinced his own honourable delicacy of feeling would make him perceive that it was absolutely necessary for any lady entering into a family like mine, by marrying my only son, to meet us upon equal terms; and so I left the matter, repeating how happy I should be to receive his visit at the hour of two, and to cultivate

more intimately an acquaintance, which, though short, had afforded me great pleasure."

Had Charles Lacy given way to what he felt, he would have kicked over the table at once, and thrown the claret jug which was standing before him into the midst of the tall mirror on the other side of the room ; and many another man in his situation would at once have cut my Aunt Pontypool's throat with the razor of indignant imagination, and have in thought given her and her good intentions up to all the fiends which people a place that shall here be nameless. But Lacy could restrain both his corporal feet and hands, and could curb the four legs of Fancy also with a strong rein. The table, therefore, stood firm before him, the claret-jug remained unmoved, and in regard to the author of all the evil, he went no farther than once more exclaiming in his own mind, if such a solecism as *exclaiming internally* may be permitted to an unfortunate man, who has no other way of expressing himself, "My Aunt Pontypool ! my Aunt Pontypool !"

He remained silent, too, for some moments ; but then seeing, by a certain play of features which flitted, aurora-borealis-like, over his father's face, that the peer was about to begin again, and wishing much to have out his own part of the dialogue before his brain got confused, or excited, or stupefied, by all the unpleasant feelings that were busy at his heart, he replied as dutifully as he could find it in his heart to do. "I am extremely sorry, sir," he said, "that you have thought it necessary to take this step ; as it will compel me, I grieve to say, to make my formal proposal to Colonel Adair for his daughter's hand, before the period which I had fixed for that purpose. Just hear me, my lord, to a conclusion. I have, as you say, gone so far in my addresses to Miss Adair, that even if I did not wish it, I should feel myself bound to go on in the most decided manner, if I desired to possess my own esteem, and to feel myself, as I have always done hitherto, a man of honour."

"But, Charles," interrupted his father, "this renders it all the more fortunate that I have acted as I have done, as it will throw the onus of withdrawing from the business entirely upon Colonel Adair, without your being in the slightest degree implicated in the affair. The very means have been taken that you could desire for preserving appearances,

and the matter will drop naturally without any step on your part."

"It cannot, and it must not, so drop, my lord," replied Lacy; "my attachment to Miss Adair is not a matter of idle levity, as you believe. You have acted upon a wrong estimation of my feelings; but I trust that when you are aware of what those feelings really are, you will alter your views upon the subject. I love Helen Adair, sir, in a manner which will not permit any trifling with my affections; and if I am not fortunate enough to obtain her hand, depend upon it I shall never marry any other person."

"O but this is nonsense, Charles," replied his father with an incredulous smile; "this is all romance! Your cousin Mary has infected you. Young men get over these love-fits very easily. I will recommend you a few doses of Peruvian bark, and a couple of bottles of claret per diem. It will work a cure, depend upon it, if you take it long enough."

Lacy was provoked, but he commanded himself. "You are entirely mistaken, my dear father," he replied; "and I think if you will take the trouble to look back upon my former life, and to remember that I have now reached the age of six-and-twenty without being troubled with any of these love-fits you speak of, you will do me justice, which you do not do at present. But still further, my dear sir, I must tell you, that this attachment has not remained uncombed in my own bosom, and that the reason of my going to Paris last year, and remaining there during the whole autumn and winter, which you thought very strange, was for the purpose of endeavouring to overcome the love which I thought was only just rising in my heart. I found, my lord, that it could not be overcome; and it was only after I had tried every means to crush it in vain, that I at length yielded to it."

"Then, Charles," said his father decidedly, "you yourself must have seen and felt all the objections which exist to such an alliance, and are only led towards it, you confess, by blind passion. How can you expect that I, who am actuated by no such passion, should consent to that which was so objectionable in your own eyes, that you took every means to conquer the weakness which impelled to commit it?"

"You mistake me, sir," replied Lacy, "I saw but one

objection : I neither looked upon the passion as a weakness, nor its object as unworthy of all my endeavours ; but I knew that on one unfortunate point the alliance might be objectionable in your eyes, and it was to meet your wishes, such as I believed I should find them, to avoid giving you pain, or causing you uneasiness, that I subjected myself to a struggle of many months against feelings of which I am individually proud."

Lord Methwyn was silent for several minutes, for he could not help appreciating his son's conduct, although, as we have shown long ago, he was not a man to yield many steps on any subject where either pride or interest were concerned. "I am obliged to you, Charles," he said at length, "for having considered my opinion in this matter more than, from Lady Pontypool's showing, I believed you to have done. I certainly do disapprove of the marriage—I certainly think, and ever shall think, that in choosing a wife you should look for such a portion with her as your own fortune and rank entitle you to expect. Under these circumstances, your union with Miss Adair, though I can in no degree object to her family, can never have my approval ; but, perhaps, had I known that you had already, in consideration of my views, endeavoured so long and so judiciously to overcome this unfortunate passion, I should not have written to Colonel Adair in the way I have done. From Lady Pontypool's account, however, it seemed to me, though she did not exactly say so, that you were going on with this young lady in a wild, heedless way, without any regard to what was right, or what was pleasing to me, or any one else."

"Oh, my Aunt Pontypool! my Aunt Pontypool!" exclaimed Lacy aloud ; "far, far from it my dear sir. If Lady Pontypool would but learn to guide her kindness by a little discretion, and believe that other people knew their own business best, how much mischief would be spared. The simple fact, sir, is, that when I went down to _____ last summer, I met Miss Adair, and very soon learned to feel for her as I never felt for any woman before."

"She is certainly a very charming girl," rejoined his father, "there is no denying it, Charles."

"As soon, however, as I became aware of what I did feel," Lacy continued, "I thought instantly of your opinion upon the subject, saw that there might be objections,

and I confess, by a great effort, tore myself away ; went to Paris, entered as much as possible into society, and did every thing that I possibly could to drive the thought of Helen Adair out of my head : but I found it all in vain, and returned, intending to do what I could to obtain your consent. I found Colonel Adair's situation changed infinitely for the worse ; I saw evidently that his own pride would prevent him listening to my proposal if made then ; and I determined—while I assisted to the utmost of my power, in the effort to better his fortunes—to wait patiently, in hopes that they might become such as would remove any objections on your part, and prevent any opposition on his ; but of course, in the mean time, it could scarcely be expected that I should not let Helen Adair perfectly understand what were my feelings towards her."

" Well, Charles, I am very sorry for you," replied his father, with a kind of sigh which certainly might express as much weariness of the subject, as grief for his son's disappointment ; " you have acted a great deal better, and more prudently, than I thought ; and as for old Colonel Adair, from what I saw of him at Mary's, it is quite evident that he is the last man who would seek to entrap any man into an unequal match. He is as proud as a fallen angel, or a Welsh knight, that is clear, and had I known all this before, I might not have written as I have written ; but, on the contrary, should have tried to make up my mind to look quietly on upon what I could not prevent. As it is, however, I am afraid the old gentleman will have heard too much of my opinion to relish the matter."

" But now, my dear father," said Lacy ; " now that you know what my feelings are, that you are aware that having tried all that mortal power could do to conquer those feelings I have found it impossible, and that if I do not marry Miss Adair I shall certainly never marry any one else—now that you know all this, let me ask, may not those opinions be so far softened down to Colonel Adair, that he may be induced, on his part, to give the consent that you, on your part, are kind enough to say you would not withhold ?"

" No, Charles ! no !" replied Lord Methwyn, " I have unfortunately been induced to give Colonel Adair my opinion on the subject ; they are my opinions still, and ever will be my opinions, and I cannot even in the slightest de-

gree retract or modify them. I am very sorry for you, my dear Charles, and would do any thing in my power to make you happy in your own way. Indeed, any little wishes or prejudices—if you like to call them so—of mine I would sacrifice at once, seeing that you have endeavoured to sacrifice your passion to my opinions; but I cannot deny in any shape, or even conceal, now that I have once avowed them, what those opinions are; and, as to your never marrying, Charles, and all that, it is mere romance. You will get over all that, my dear son."

"Did you ever know me, sir, swerve in the slightest degree from those resolutions which I had formed, as I have formed this, upon long and deliberate consideration of the whole circumstances?" demanded Lacy.

"Why, no, my dear boy," replied his father, with a smile; "you are pretty obstinate, I must confess; but still, Charles, you know that reversing the nurse's old observation, 'your father takes after you' in that respect. But not to jest upon a serious subject, Charles, you must feel, yourself, that it is perfectly impossible for me to deny opinions that I have written down, to say that I do not still entertain them, or to suffer any one to suppose that they will ever be altered. If, knowing as he does what I think of the matter, Colonel Adair chooses to give you his daughter, I shall make no opposition, will willingly receive your pretty little wife, and do every thing that is kind by her. Even more, had I been aware that you had struggled hard to do what was sensible, instead of what is romantic, and found the temptation more than you could bear, I myself, in compassion of your weakness, would have let you do what you liked, and also would have endeavoured to keep my opinions upon the subject to myself, unless some one asked them; but you see, Lady Pontypool ——"

"I wish to heaven that my Aunt Pontypool had remained where she was a little longer," replied Lacy. "It is really very provoking that she will act thus."

"She was influenced, I can assure you, Charles, by the very kindest motives towards you," answered his father; "and, indeed, did not act so much without judgment in the affair as would appear. Colonel Adair, it seems, was as ignorant of this attachment as I was, and only found it out while lying wounded at Brussels in Lady Mary's house. As soon as he heard of it, and was able to travel, like an

honourable man he set out to communicate the fact to me, and informed Lady Pontypool of his intentions."

"She told him the whole herself, depend upon it," said Lacy, with a burst of spleen that could not be repressed. "She told him the whole in her own fashion, I am quite sure."

"Of that I know nothing," replied Lord Methwyn; "but, however, she grew alarmed, it seems, lest the old Colonel and I should quarrel on the subject, hurried all poor Mary's preparations, and as Colonel Adair was detained at Calais, she reached London about the same time, and coming here told me the whole business. This explained the cause of his visit, and I immediately wrote to him, as I have told you. And now, Charles—do not keep all the wine beside you—and now, Charles, I must leave you to act in the business as you may judge proper; but you certainly cannot say that I am acting the harsh, or even the unkind father, my dear boy. I have as much consideration for your weaknesses, Charles, I can assure you, as I have for my own; and no man knows how to treat his own particular foibles with greater tenderness than I do—as you well know."

"You have acted far more kindly in the business than I expected, or perhaps had any right to expect," replied Lacy, who had in truth been somewhat surprised at the consideration which Lord Methwyn had shown for his feelings. How the peer might have acted had he seen Lacy before Lady Pontypool, is unnecessary to inquire—it would be a piece of minute anatomy perhaps not quite fair to practise on the good Lord's heart. Certain it is, however, that Lord Methwyn, who had a good deal of discrimination, in regard to human character, so far understood that of Colonel Adair, that he calculated that there were about a hundred thousand chances to one against the old officer listening to Lacy's proposal for one moment after the note which had been sent to him in the morning. He, therefore, could afford to be considerate; although I do not mean absolutely to say that this conviction regarding Colonel Adair did really influence his conduct towards his son.

He sipped his wine, however, and eat a *longue-vie* between the sips with great tranquillity of mind and body, while his son, leaning with his elbow on the table, his head

upon his hand, and his untasted wine in the glass, gave way to that idle, seducing, Achelous-like fiend Speculation. Sometimes she grinned at him with the dark features of despair, sometimes she borrowed the radiant smile of Hope, but certainly never did the son of ocean assume more shapes and forms when combatting with his great opponent, than did meditation, while engaged with the new difficulties which were cast in Lacy's way. As he thus thought and re-thought—sometimes remembering Colonel Adair's rigid principles, and honourable pride, and feeling as sure as his father that the old officer would hold out to the last—sometimes hoping that perseverance and entreaty, and Helen's love, might soften him and make him yield at last—as he thus thought and re-thought, Mr. Adair was announced.

Henry Adair, according to his promise, had now made up his mind to rejoin his friend, though partly distaste to all society at the moment, partly a sort of shy antipathy to meeting with strangers, unless some extraordinary circumstance brought them within his sphere of feelings, had made him linger after the period he had at first assigned for proceeding to Portman Square.

" You have dined, I presume, Mr. Adair," said Lord Methwyn, who had seen him once before.

" Yes, I dined at the hotel," he replied ; " I like dining at hotels, for one can do any thing else one pleases at the same time, without offending any one but the waiter. I do not choose to be forced by that great Nebuchadnezzar, custom, to bow down and worship in solemn silence the golden image that gluttony has set up. Besides, I wished to write a letter while I fed ; and therefore," he added, remembering the forms of society,—" and therefore I declined the invitation that Lacy was kind enough to make me."

" Pray, may I ask, if the question be not impertinent," said Lord Methwyn, " were you writing to your father ?"

" Yes," replied Henry Adair, " yes, I have not written to him since I was in Paris. But there may be letters from him here—I forgot—I took the liberty, my lord, of begging him to address them to your house, with which liberty your son assured me that you would not feel offended."

" Not at all ! not at all !" replied Lord Methwyn.—" None have arrived that I know of. But I heard of your father accidentally this morning. He was still at Brussels."

" Yes, of course," said Henry Adair, musing, " yes, of

course—he would not leave it yet I should think. Did you hear of his health, my lord?"

"Why the account was not particularly favourable," replied Lord Methwyn. "He had not been very well."

"Indeed! indeed!" cried Henry Adair, all the affectionate son rising up in his bosom and sparkling in his eyes, "not seriously ill, my lord, I trust?—not in danger—did your informant say?"

"Why he represented his illness as somewhat alarming," replied Lord Methwyn; "a threatening of apoplexy, I think he said—my informant was a gentleman by the name of Green."

"What, Charles Green, the Adjutant!" cried Henry Adair, starting up with grief and anxiety in his countenance, "I will go to him directly! Where is he to be found?"

"I really cannot tell," replied Lord Methwyn; "he did not leave his address, and I foolishly did not ask it."

"You will hear at the agents' of the regiment, Adair," joined in Lacy, who had scarcely spoken further than was sufficient to establish the conversation between his friend and Lord Methwyn. "Cox and Greenwood are the people, I think. I will walk with you if you are going, for my head aches a good deal."

"Will you not take coffee before you go?" asked the peer. "Charles, ring the bell."

"No, I will go directly," replied Henry Adair. "I beg you to pardon me, Lord Methwyn, but I am anxious for my father—very anxious indeed. I have a great mind to set out for Brussels at once."

"You had better hear what Green says upon the subject in the first place," said Lacy. "You are not in a fit state to travel, Adair, without some repose. Shall we go to Greenwood's?"

Henry Adair expressed his readiness, and Lacy and his friend taking their hats issued forth into the streets, once more leaving Lord Methwyn to moralize, over his wine, upon the eager and hasty nature of youth.

"I shall set off for Brussels either to-night or early to-morrow morning," said Henry Adair, ere they had got a hundred yards from the door. "I am sure Lacy, you will do me the kindness of pursuing to a close the business which brought me over here. Communicate the facts at

once to Colonel Adair, when you can find him. Let him take what measures he likes; I will make no stipulations, though my heart bleeds for my father; and I fear that what I wrote from Paris may have caused his illness."

"I trust not," replied Lacy, "I trust not; but, Adair, you have the satisfaction of having done your duty; and, perhaps, in regard to communicating with Colonel Adair, it may even be better to leave the matter in my hands, as a third person can suggest those calm and private measures which you would feel a delicacy in proposing."

"I would propose no measures to him whatever," replied Henry Adair; "I have no right to ask any forbearance.—You can do what you like—I trust to you entirely, Lacy. As far as my father is concerned, I will do all that I can to induce immediate restoration of what has been unjustly withheld; and should he die," he added with a degree of bitter calmness: "should he die, you may assure Colonel Adair that, perfectly convinced of his right, I would not be an hour without doing him justice."

Lacy's happiness for life at that moment, hung upon a straw balanced on the edge of a knife; and as hope watched it, trembling, sometimes up, sometimes down, under the breath of every casual event, she now stood upon tiptoe to see how high it was raised, now let herself sink down upon her heels, and held out her hand to despair. The words of Henry Adair made the light goddess spring up at the engagement which they implied, an engagement that insured to Helen Adair that future fortune which would remove all difficulties on either side: and hurrying on towards Charing Cross, Lacy and Henry Adair had reached the end of Sackville street, ere they remembered that the agents' offices had long been closed, and that not a single melancholy clerk would be found to give even a surly reply to their ill-timed questions. As such convictions sometimes do, this recollection came upon them both at the same moment, and they simultaneously stopped and mutually expressed it.

"You must seek him, then, as a last resource, at my cousin Mary's," said Lacy; "good Lady Pontypool took a great fancy to the worthy Adjutant, and it is most likely that, if they came over on the same day and in the same ship, which from my father's account, I suspect they did, Lady Pontypool will be able to give you his address. In

"I will go and seek out Colonel Adair, and see who dwells at Lammers' or my father's house in town. It is now near nine o'clock, and I must be back and on the Colonel's night. Otherwise I may not see you, but you know the whole party at Mary's. There is a good reason for calling at such a

house, convenience as are at this moment in the world. To the Colonel, "I am but too little used to such a house as this, and I am not acquainted with my one. I fear that my friend Lacy has not been well treated by his master, Lacy. I have seen him in his master's carriage, but not in the manner that I have seen him in mine. Well, in two hours, at Lammers' or my father's, I will be there. Farewell!" And thus the boy went away.

CHAPTER XVI.

Charles Lacy was in New York. It was a Saturday evening, and he was a guest in a room of twi-
light, where the lights were extinguished, and the only light came from a lamp burning along in the corner. It was the evening of the week's la-
bor, and Charles Lacy was resting. However,
he was not alone, and a boy was lying at the
foot of the bed, and was claimed as the attendant.
The boy was not there that Colonel Adair
had selected. The house was that of some
gentleman whom— and therefore on he was kept to
the two numbers. Ten doors, like ten manu-
factured steps, make often a wonderful difference in
a street, and Lacy thought that the house at which
he had stopped up might very well be the one which Colonel
Adair had selected. It was a neat handsome house enough,
and yet one in which lodgings were very likely to be let to
a superior officer in the army. As Charles Lacy looked at it, there was a sensation of pleasure; a warm, comfortable
feeling spread itself all over his bosom, while he mentally com-
pared this abode with that in which he had found Col-
onel Adair living, not six months before, and said to himself,
"I have had a share in this." Walking up three steps,

which led to the door, he knocked with the brazen nuisance which announces to our friends, neighbours, and servants, that somebody wants to come in to our house ; and, in a moment after, a very neat woman-servant made her appearance.

“ Is Colonel Adair at home ? ” demanded Lacy, because he was quite certain that he had found the precise house, and did not choose to unsettle the matter by asking if Colonel Adair lived there.

“ Colonel Adair, sir ? No, sir ! no ! ” replied the girl, with a sort of confusion of manner which Lacy did not understand : “ No, sir, Colonel Adair has been out some time.”

“ Is Miss Adair at home ? ” next demanded Charles Lacy, having fully determined upon his conduct, and feeling that all reserve was now at an end forever.

“ No, sir ! ” replied the girl ; “ Miss Adair went with her father.”

“ This is very unfortunate,” said Lacy ; “ very unfortunate indeed ! They must be out at dinner, I suppose. However, give Colonel Adair that card, and tell him Captain Lacy will call upon him before eleven o’clock to-morrow, upon very particular business.”

“ Captain Lacy ! ” said the servant, hesitating, “ Captain Lacy ! oh dear ! I dare say I may tell you, sir ; for the Colonel said, when he went out in the morning, that he wanted very much to see you. He mentioned your name twice.”

“ You dare say you may tell me ? ” replied Lacy, “ What do you mean, my good girl ? can you tell me where the Colonel is to be found ? ”

“ No, sir, that I cannot ! ” replied the girl ; “ all I can tell is, that he was arrested this afternoon about three o’clock, poor gentleman ! The young lady would go with her papa, say what he would ; and Louisa, her maid, set off directly for some great relations she said they had. I cannot tell what prison they took him to ; but master can tell, I dare say, sir, if you’d like to see him.”

“ Certainly,” replied Lacy, mastering the emotions to which these tidings gave rise ; “ certainly ! show him my card, and tell him I wish to speak with him.”

The girl, without reply, retreated to a back parlour, and after a moment’s consultation with some one within, reappeared, and besought Lacy to enter. The person whom

the room contained seemed a retired tradesman of the better class, and from him Lacy heard the same story, with a very slight variation, which the servant had told. Colonel Adair, he said, had come into his lodgings the evening before, and had been arrested about three o'clock for a debt of six hundred pounds. He had declared, in hearing of the landlord, that the debt was fictitious, if not in whole, at least in great part, and had desired to retain his lodgings, saying that the whole business must speedily be cleared up.

"At whose suit was he arrested, may I ask?" said Lacy.

"The name was Williamson, I think," replied the landlord.

Lacy's patience gave way, and he stamped his foot upon the ground, exclaiming, "The scoundrel!"

"I was quite sure that there was something wrong in the whole affair, sir," said the landlord, "and so I told my servant not to say any thing about it, for fear it should mortify the gentleman when he gets out,—for he is quite a gentleman, I see;—and I offered, too, to go any where he liked for bail, and to be as kind as possible to the young lady; but he would not let me go for bail, and Miss Adair would go with her father, though I told her that I knew it was shockingly dear living in a spunging-house."

"Pray to what place did they take him?" asked Lacy.

"There is the address, sir,—No. —, Chancery Lane," replied the landlord;—"are you going there to-night?"

"Directly," answered Lacy: "Colonel Adair did not know that I was in town, or I doubt not he would have sent to me. However, the debt is undoubtedly false, and means must be taken for punishing the scoundrel Williamson."

"Jane! Jane! bring down the note that was left!" exclaimed the landlord, calling to the maid. "Perhaps, sir, you would be kind enough to take this note to Colonel Adair. It was left, not long after he went, by a person who seemed anxious he should have it soon."

"I dare say it is from my father, Lord Methwyn," replied Lacy, in great hopes that the peer's epistle had thus been stopped by the way; but on looking at the address, he perceived that it was written in a very different hand; and putting it in his pocket, he wished the landlord good night, and turned again to the street.

A hackney-coach was his immediate resource; and tell-

ing the coachman to drive as quick as he could go to Chancery Lane,—that place, the very name of which sounds of ruin, destruction, pillage, confiscation, and imprisonment,—he cast himself back in the vehicle, and gave himself up to manifold thoughts concerning all the strange and wayward turns through which fate seemed purposely to lead the fortune of his loves. The coachman having received such injunctions to speed from a person of Lacy's appearance, as he knew would bring forth additional pieces of silver if complied with, beat with unmerciful hand the tired jades that dragged his uneasy carriage, and rattling over the pavement, with sounds and movements which seemed to indicate that not five pieces of all the many scraps of iron, and wood, and leather, whereof the thing was composed, would ever reach Chancery Lane united, the hackney-coach tumbled up the Strand, passed Clement's Church, and through the Temple Bar. Lacy, with unmingle satisfaction,—for the time had seemed long, and the motion was unpleasant,—felt himself whirled round the corner of Chancery Lane ; and the next minute the carriage stopped at the number to which it had been directed, and with which the coachman was nearly as familiar as with his own. Lacy's purse was in his hand, and paying the man well for what he had done, he bade him wait, lest he might have further need of the coach's uncomfortable services, and then knocked sharply at the door. It was opened by a stout man with a red waist-coat, who replied to his inquiries for Colonel Adair,—“ O yes, sir !—walk in. The parlour on the left, sir. We've given the Colonel the best rooms, 'cause we've no other lodgers at present, sir.”

With a beating heart Lacy opened the door, and still more violently did his heart palpitate at the sight he saw. It was a small, dull room, with bars before the windows ; and up and down, in the scanty space which it afforded, Colonel Adair was walking slowly and with difficulty, on account of the wound, but with his head still erect and his eye, full of indignant fire, raised to the opposite spot on the wall ; while on one of the horse-hair chairs which the room contained, sat his daughter Helen, looking as lovely in her deep sorrow as in the moments of her brightest happiness. Her beautiful eyes were fixed full upon her father, but at the opening of the door she turned them thither, and starting

up with a glad cry, she exclaimed, "O here is Charles!—here is Captain Lacy, papa!"

Colonel Adair turned,—for at that moment his face was from the door,—and instantly grasped Lacy warmly by the hand. "This is very kind of you, Lacy," he said, "very kind of you; and yet I dare scarcely say, that I am happy to see you."

"I comprehend why, my dear sir," replied Lacy, shaking his hand; "but yet I trust to make you say that you are happy to see me before we part. Helen, dear Helen, do not weep, for all must and will go well yet. First, let us think of setting the present unpleasant business to rights. I understand that Williamson, that atrocious scoundrel, has arrested you on a false debt, my dear Colonel; and we must have you bailed out immediately."

"Not altogether false, as far as I can learn," replied the old officer. "In the first place there is a debt of some sixty or seventy pounds, for different accoutrements, due to a man to whom Williamson himself recommended me. The fellow could not send in his bill before I joined. It, of course, I could and would pay, but it seems that Williamson has bought up the debt and joined to it what he has the impudence to call his bill for law expenses. He never did any business for me in his life, that I know of, for which he was not paid years ago. But as to bailing me, Lacy, I cannot suffer you to do so. Though there is no man for whom I entertain so deep a regard, yet there are circumstances, as you well know, which render that impossible."

"Oh, papa!" cried Helen, "consider, do consider!"

"I have considered, my child, and it cannot be," replied Colonel Adair; "deeply grieved am I to wring your young and affectionate heart, my dearest child—deeply, deeply to return you pain and sorrow, Charles Lacy, for all the comfort and happiness you have at various times given me, but I think it my duty, Lacy—I feel that honour calls me to say now at once and for ever, that my daughter shall never, with my consent enter into a family that is unwilling to receive her. Do not think that I am either hasty or angry, Lacy," he continued, seeing his friend about to speak with some eagerness, "I confess that a little time ago I was rather vexed at what I thought was like concealment; but Helen has shown me that we were suddenly called away from Alton at the very moment she was about to tell me all, and has reminded me

that no opportunity has since presented itself. But I have since thoroughly weighed the matter, and your father's note of this morning is quite enough."

"But, my dear, sir," replied Lacy, "I had not seen my father when he wrote that note ; he had then but a very imperfect view of the whole business, gathered from a somewhat indiscreet communication of Lady Pontypool, who called upon him this morning for the purpose of telling him all she knew of the business ; and—"

"She might have saved herself that trouble," said Colonel Adair, "for I informed her—as the person from whom I myself received my only information—before I left Brussels, that I should proceed to London as fast as possible, in order to communicate personally with Lord Methwyn ; but I beg your pardon, Lacy—you were about to say—"

"That I have since seen my father," continued Lacy ; "that I have told him the exact truth, in every respect ; that I have corrected several erroneous impressions which Lady Pontypool, with the best intentions in the world, had given him ; and that he permits me to say that he will in no degree oppose my marriage to my beloved Helen, and that he will receive her with every kindness as my wife and his daughter."

A bright light beamed up in Helen's eyes, the light of joy and happiness, which the warm blushes on her cheeks did not serve to conceal, but rather to heighten, and for a moment an expression of satisfaction passed over the fine countenance of the old soldier, but it vanished again in an instant.

"But that note, Lacy," he said, "that note—nothing can have occurred to alter his opinion since that note was written, because nothing but misfortune has befallen to alter my situation. My daughter can no more enter your family upon equal terms than she could then, and in it I find his views definitely stated, that no one could or should be received into any house where she does not come as an equal in all respects. Lacy, it cannot be ! The rich Lord Methwyn shall never have to say that his son with my consent married the daughter of Adair the beggar." And rising from the chair on which he had flung himself while this discussion was taking place, he again began to pace the little room.

Helen wept in silence, although Lacy by look and sign endeavoured to comfort her, while he replied more imme-

dately to her father. "Indeed, my dear sir," he said, "you have understood my father too hastily. You may perhaps think that some angry dispute has taken place between him and me, which has wrung from him an unwilling consent, but I can assure you such has not been the case; he spoke liberally and kindly as soon as he heard the whole fully explained, and he even expressed a regret that he had been induced to write that note to you."

"But he did write it, Lacy! he did write it," replied Colonel Adair, "nor is the note itself at all unreasonable or impolite. It is the note of a sensible man of the world, expressing calmly, and civilly, and with every gentlemanly form and phrase, certain fixed opinions on points where I doubt not he is very right. Till I can comply with the views therein expressed, my daughter's hand can never be given to a son of his."

"That may perhaps be sooner than you can expect, my dear sir," replied Lacy, "and at all events I will still trust that even should it not be so, your affection for this dear girl, whose happiness I proudly believe is linked with mine, and even in some degree your regard for myself, whose whole peace for life is now at stake, will lead to make some little sacrifice, and consent to your daughter entering a family where she will be received by every member of it with every kindness."—Colonel Adair shook his head, but Lacy went on. "However, my dear Colonel, we are only wringing Helen's heart by this discussion at a moment of deep sorrow from other causes. I have many things to speak to you upon; but my first anxiety is to free you from your present situation, that the machinations of that villain Williamson may not prove effectual. Suffer me, my dear sir, to arrange this affair for you."

"Impossible, Lacy! impossible!" replied Colonel Adair; "my mind has been in such a state of confusion since I have been here, that I have not been able to think correctly on what I ought to do under these circumstances. I shall be able to do so between to-night and Monday morning, but in the meantime it is clear that I cannot accept the assistance which I know you would kindly afford."

"Indeed you are wrong," said Lacy, mortified at the old officer's pertinacity, "you do not consider to what you are exposing yourself—you do not consider to what you are exposing Helen. Very soon, my dear sir, your only cause

for opposing our union will be removed, I have no doubt ; and then how mortifying will it be to reflect that you have remained in this wretched place two nights unnecessarily, because you would not receive any assistance from a man attached to you by so many feelings as myself."

"But I do not understand you, Lacy," rejoined Colonel Adair ; "you say all obstacles will shortly be removed—what do you mean?"

"It is somewhat long to tell," replied Lacy, "and I much wish that you would let me first restore you to your own house, where you could act at once upon the information I am about to give you. However, if you will persist in remaining here, I had better explain it at once."

"Do not say that I persist in remaining here, Lacy," said Colonel Adair, with a glance of keen feeling towards his daughter ; "you should know me better, my dear young friend ; nothing on earth can be more painful, more terrible, than my situation and my feelings at this moment. To be in such a place with my poor girl is enough to distract me ; but when I come to consider that probably before Monday morning the fact of my having been arrested—having been taken to a spunging-house—will be known at the Horse Guards, and talked of at the agents', and made common to every officer whom I know—by heavens, I can scarcely keep my senses ! Nobody will know, nobody will hear, nobody will heed the fact that the debt is fictitious, in a great degree, but I shall be disgraced and undone for life."

"Well, then, sir, so much the more necessary is it that you should return home at once," replied Lacy, with a gleam of pleasure beaming up in his eyes, as if some new and fortunate thought had struck him. "Now I think of it, we have a mutual friend in London, who, I am sure, will instantly do all that is necessary to free you from this unpleasant situation, since you will not accept of my assistance. What think you of our worthy acquaintance, Mr. Owen Snipes ? He is intimate with your excellent friend, Dr. Bellingham—he is a perfect lover of Helen—he is never out of town—and will be here in a moment. Let me write him a note, my dear sir. Helen, dearest Helen, join your voice to mine to plead with your father."

"Charles Lacy ! Charles Lacy ! you must not speak to

her so," exclaimed Colonel Adair, in a sad tone, "Indeed, indeed, you must not."

But Helen did join her voice to Lacy's, and Colonel Adair, after a few minutes' consideration, agreed to his proposal.

"I am already that gentleman's debtor," he said, "to a considerable amount, and it is but right that he should know my exact situation. Write to him then, Lacy, if you like; I would do it myself, but I doubt my powers of composing any thing like common sense at this moment."

Pen and ink were easily procured, and Lacy wrote a few hurried lines to his worthy lawyer, explaining Colonel Adair's exact situation, and begging him to come to his aid immediately. He added, "that Colonel Adair, from motives of delicacy, refused his assistance, and worded it in such a manner that the good solicitor might comprehend—in case Mammon should for the moment have possession of his ear—that he, Charles Lacy, was willing to be the responsible person in this business as he had been in the last."

The note was instantly despatched to the dwelling of the lawyer, and Lacy, prevailing upon Colonel Adair to sit down, to which he had a great distaste, under his agitation of mind, turned as quickly as possible to the subject of Henry Adair, fearful of any new prohibitions and objections, if he suffered the old officer's thoughts to revert to Helen.

"I said, my dear sir, that you are likely very soon to be placed in a situation totally different from the present," said Lacy; "and while the man is gone I will explain what I mean. Henry Adair, the son of your cousin, Lord Adair,"

"Yes, yes, I know what you mean!" interrupted Colonel Adair, whose mind was in that state of impatient irritation which can hardly bear a superfluous word. "A very fine young man—he passed the night beside me on the field of Waterloo."

"So he told me," continued Lacy; "and moreover, he repeated to me a very curious, and to you interesting, discovery, which you made through Adjutant Green, of the dragoons."

"Yes!" said Colonel Adair; "yet it can scarcely be called a discovery either. At least it will lead to no good. My grandfather, I dare say, did repent of his harshness to the son of his favourite child, and did, I doubt not, make a new will

upon his death-bed. But that rascal, Williamson, put the will in the fire, depend upon it—it is a thing done every day, as we all know. It is burnt, be sure of that, Lacy, and if you found your hopes of a change in my affairs being brought about by any thing connected with that will, you build upon air, Lacy—upon thin air!"

"I feel convinced that it has not been burnt, my dear sir!" replied Lacy; "and have proof positive that, if it be so, the destruction of that document has taken place very lately. Do you think, my dear sir, that Williamson would commit such an act for another man's benefit? Do you think that he would lose his hold of such power over your cousin, Lord Adair, as the possession of that will gave him, by burning it? Do you think that he would so eagerly seek a marriage between his son and your daughter, as almost to risk an act of felony to bring it about, if he had not possessed in his own hands the means of making that marriage a mine of wealth for himself? No, no, my dear Colonel, all this would be proof sufficient that the will has been very lately in existence, and is so in all probability now, even if I had no other proof, which, however, I have. Young Williamson was taken prisoner at Quatre Bras——"

"Oh, yes, yes; I know all that story!" cried Colonel Adair, his eyes flashing with the very remembrance; "and how the audacious villain dared to give out that my Helen was his wife. I wish I had caught him; I would have horse-whipped him as well as his father, till I took the flesh off his back—the pitiful, lying, mean-spirited scoundrel!"

"I took that part of the affair upon myself," replied Lacy; "and I do not think, my dear sir, that even you could have done it more completely than I did."

"You did? you did?" cried Colonel Adair, grasping his hand and shaking it heartily. "Thank you, Lacy! thank you! I am very much obliged to you!"

Helen turned pale, for her mind at once ran on to the consequences; and though she saw Lacy there safe, and well, yet there was a natural revolting in her heart at the very idea of bloodshed, which made her feel a sick faintness, to think even that he whom she loved might have dyed his hand in the blood of him she hated.

Lacy, however, went on. "I sought him out whenever I could get into Paris, and treated him as I thought he deserved. A challenge was of course the consequence."

"Oh, Charles!" cried Helen Adair.

"No, no, dearest Helen," answered Lacy; "do not be alarmed—nothing took place!"

"What, did he prove a poltroon too?" demanded the old soldier.

"No!" replied Lacy; "no! to do him bare justice, he showed every disposition to behave in those respects like a man of honour; but he met with a severe accident on the very morning appointed. He was driving a wild young horse which ran away, and he was taken up mortally injured. But now comes the curious part of the story. It seems that, through life, this Lord Adair has been, in a great degree, a mere tool to that villain Williamson, rendered so undoubtedly by the power which the lawyer has over him. Henry Adair has been suffered to keep company with this unfortunate young man, was sent to the same schools with him, and even was to have been his second in the affair with myself, though he did not know that I was the person. He, however, remained, with young Williamson till he died, and heard from him, as he was dying, the whole story of the will, its nature, its concealment, and where it was preserved. More—still more—my dear sir; the young scoundrel, it would seem, ere he consented to the scheme against our beloved Helen, extorted from his father the key of the chest in which it was kept, and that key he put into the hands of Henry Adair."

"Good God, this is very strange!" exclaimed Colonel Adair, starting up, and again pacing the little parlour; "very strange indeed, Lacy—after more than twenty years!"

"Well, my dear sir," continued Lacy, "I need not tell you—for his very manner, his every word is convincing—that your young cousin is as enthusiastic in his ideas of honour, as any Adair that ever yet lived. He communicated the whole facts to me, and we set off instantly for England, I anxious to hear of Helen, and he desirous to do the long-delayed act of justice. Our first visit was to Williamson's house, but there we were disappointed;"—and Lacy proceeded to detail all that occurred in the interview with the lawyer. Colonel Adair's countenance fell, however, when he heard that the paper was not in the box, where it had been supposed to be, and he said with a sigh, "You see, Lacy! you see! It is not to be, depend upon it."

"Indeed, I will depend upon the exact contrary, my

dear sir," replied Lacy; "I think it is to be, and as Henry Adair has left the investigation in my hands, with the fullest authority to use every means to establish your right, it shall go hard but the will shall be found, and proved, before many days are over."

"In vain, Lacy! in vain!" said Colonel Adair, shaking his head despondingly. "But Henry Adair, you say, has left the business in your hands; where is he then himself, poor fellow! It must be a bitter undertaking for him, indeed."

"He sets off either to-night, or to-morrow morning for Brussels," replied Lacy. "The fact is, he wrote to his father in the first heat of this painful discovery, and since then my father has learned that Lord Adair has had a stroke of apoplexy. Henry Adair takes blame to himself in the business, fearing that he spoke of the matter to his father in an incautious manner. He has therefore determined to return at once to Brussels, as soon as he has heard from my father's informant what is the exact state of Lord Adair; but he commissioned me to tell you, my dear sir, that in case of his worst anticipations being fulfilled in regard to his father, he will, without hesitation, restore to you that portion of the property which your grandfather intended for you, having no earthly doubt as to the fact of such a will having been made; and that should his father, on the contrary, recover, he will do all that a son can do to induce him to do justice. Thus, my dear sir," Lacy added, "I may and do feel certain that in a very short time such a change will occur as to preclude the necessity either of any unpleasant discussion taking place between you and my father, or any painful feelings being the consequence of his unfortunate letter."

"No, Lacy, no!" replied Colonel Adair, gravely, "you are mistaken. If the paper be ever found, which I do not believe will be the case, that will of course alter the whole business; but if it be not found, I cannot take advantage of the offer of Henry Adair: my title to my property must be clear, distinct, and established, and not depend upon the gift and bounty of any one. If I can produce the will, the property is mine, and willingly will I take it. But if I cannot produce the will, it is not mine, and I will have nothing to do with it."

Helen clasped her hands and raised her beautiful eyes

towards heaven: and Lacy, cast down again from all his hopes at the moment they were lifted up to the highest point, remained silent from the combination of grief and astonishment. Colonel Adair's tone, too, was so decided, that it admitted no reply, and the silence remained unbroken on all parts, till he himself interrupted it by inquiring, "Pray, from whom was it that Lord Methwyn heard of Lord Adair's illness?"

"It was from Adjutant Green," replied Lacy, shortly, too much mortified to enter into any long particulars; and Colonel Adair himself pursued the subject. "Adjutant Green!" he said, "I wonder he did not let me know that he was in London. I asked him to write me a note directly he arrived, for I wished, with his assistance, to have made some further inquiries into this very business of the will. Did you hear of his calling, Helen, or get any note?"

"A note," said Lacy, "a note! I dare say it is one I have in my pocket for you, my dear sir. I quite forgot it till this moment, but the landlord of the house in Piccadilly gave it to me, begging I would give it to you, and saying that the person who delivered it wished it to reach you soon. I really beg pardon for having forgotten it."

Colonel Adair took it and tore it open. "Yes," he said, "it is from Green, and he seems to have got some further information, for he begs me to call upon him to-night; but that my situation prevents. Read it, Lacy; what can we do in the affair?"

Lacy read, "Mr. Green," the note ran, "will be very much obliged if Colonel Adair will call upon him, in the course of this evening, at the house of Mrs. Milsome, No. 16, —— Street, Bloomsbury, upon business of very great importance to Colonel Adair himself. If he delays till Monday, he may come a day after the fair."

"A very odd note, indeed," said Lacy, "and certainly very unfortunate that you cannot go. But Mr. Snipes cannot be long now ere he makes his appearance, and then the matter here will be very soon settled."

"But even then I must take Helen home before I can go," said Colonel Adair, "and it will be past eleven before I could reach Bloomsbury."

Lacy wished from his heart that the common forms of ~~manners~~ would have permitted him to act as Helen's guardian

and protector on her way home, feeling, as Colonel Adair felt fully also, that she might have been trusted as safely to his love and honour as to the tenderness of a mother; but those forms are fire-guards hung up not to keep those who are wise enough to avoid all evil, out of the fire; but to prevent those who are foolish enough to risk it, from falling in; and Lacy was the last man in the world to wish that fire-guards should be taken down. Colonel Adair's speech, however, and the thoughts to which it gave rise, cast them both back again into meditation, when the door opened, and instead of Mr. Owen Snipes the messenger who had been sent for him appeared, bearing the unpleasant intelligence that the worthy attorney was not at home when he had called, and that the report of his maid implied he would not return till a late hour. Lacy was surprised, for good Mr. Snipes had his particular hour for laying his head upon the pillow, which he seldom, if ever, overstepped; and Colonel Adair gazed at Lacy with a look of mortification, while the bright drops rose again in Helen's eyes.

"Now, my dear Colonel," said Lacy, at length looking from one to the other, "what is to be done? You must indeed you must, yield at length."

"No, Lacy! no, not a step," replied Colonel Adair straightening his back with a rigidity which left no reply; "I am acting upon a sincere conviction of what is right and I should not easily forgive myself if I were to abandon the position I have taken up."

Lacy knew that when he had recourse to military metaphors, it was in vain to argue with him; but the Colonel himself went on, "If you will go to Green about this business," he said, "you will, I acknowledge, very much oblige me. Delayed till Monday, I might, as he says, come a day after the fair, and I will risk no loss now-a-days."

"I will go immediately," replied Lacy, forgetting altogether that he had appointed to meet Henry Adair at the very hour, over the number indicative of which, the hand of his watch was passing at that moment "I will go immediately, and let you know the results as I return."

"No, no!" said Colonel Adair, "that is too much, Lacy. I can well wait till-to morrow. Helen is fatigued and I wish her to retire to such rest as she can get in this horrid abode."

"I will beg her to set up for half an hour," said Lacy, "as I go I will call upon Mr. Owen Snipes, good man, ~~myself~~, and if I can find him will send him hither directly. But give me the note, Colonel, that I may show Green that I am invested with full powers on your part."

"Of that assure him, from me," replied the old officer; and then added, suddenly grasping his friend's hand, "Lacy, I will not apologize for the trouble I give you."

"Do not, do not," replied Lacy, "say not a word of that which you let me do for you, my dear sir; I shall make you apologize some day for that which you will not let me do—Farewell, dearest, dearest Helen."

"Farewell Charles," she answered, while her eyes ran over with bright tears; and Lacy, afraid of himself, hurried away.

CHAPTER XI.

BEFORE we proceed to follow Charles Lacy on his melancholy way, we must turn for awhile to a personage whose acts and deeds, all important as they are to the right understanding of this story, we have from various good and sufficient causes us thereunto moving, a good deal neglected in this volume—no other than my Aunt Pontypool. Nevertheless we shall by no means go so far back as the period at which we last left her at Brussels, inasmuch as a part of her actions may be already guessed by the reader from the vague hints thrown out in Lacy's conversation with his father; but, on the contrary, we shall seize upon the thread of her history at the moment that it spun, or was spun, away from Lord Methwyn's door, yet leaving a sufficient blank every here and there, to furnish a pretty little card-table for imagination to play her own game upon.

As soon as Lady Pontypool reached her niece's house, she proceeded to the drawing-room, where ~~Major~~ Kennedy was lying on the sofa, slowly recovering from ~~his~~ wounds, with Lady Mary at that moment reading to him. When her aunt entered, however, Mary paused, and laid down her book, looking intently in Lady Pontypool's face. That face was just then peculiarly radiant, for Lord Methwyn was the last man in the world to let my Aunt Pontypool

know how he intended to proceed upon the information which he received from her ; and as he had declared that it was the most natural thing in the world for young people to fall in love with each other, vowed that he had done so every five minutes during the fifth and sixth lustres of his years, and joked Lady Pontypool manfully upon her own love affairs in times gone by ; the good lady left him with a full conviction that he was the best-tempered man in the world, and would do all he could to make Lacy and Helen as happy or happier than ever two people so circumstanced were before. From the air of triumphant satisfaction which beamed on my Aunt Pontypool's lip, Lady Mary augured evil to some of her ladyship's friends ; but Mary was not in spirits to inquire, and when Lady Pontypool saw how her niece was engaged, she merely said a few words and quitted the room. In about three quarters of an hour, however, her meditations were disturbed by her maid, who informed her that Adjutant Green, who had been inquiring for her while she was out, had now returned.

"Show him into the library," said Lady Pontypool, and thither she proceeded to confer with him. What the subject of their conversation was, remains a mystery, for no one was admitted to share in their solemn conference. Towards the end, however, a few brief sentences transpired, by that great spiracle for pent secrets called the keyhole. Whether it was that her shoe had got down at heel, or that something irritated her instep, I cannot tell, but certain it is that a housemaid going past at the concluding and loudest part of Lady Pontypool's conversation with Adjutant Green, was suddenly obliged to bend her back and stoop down her head just at the keyhole of the library door, and the sounds, like fairies always making corridors of keyholes, rushed through, so that she could not help hearing Lady Pontypool say, "But if we frighten him very much, Mr. Green, and show him that we know all about the paper, and his having concealed it, and all the rest, we may persuade him to come forward and confess the truth. I have always heard that three witnesses were enough to any will, and if he ~~will~~ but be one, there are you and this person you speak of, and the lawyer himself ; so that the paper will not be needed : I think that's the law, Mr. Green," she concluded with a very legal look.

Now Adjutant Green knew no more of the law than Lady

Pontypool herself, and therefore he dared say it was ; but Adjutant Green had a cautious disposition in some respects, and therefore he said, " You know, my Lady Pontypool, you promised me that you would not reveal a word of what I told you just now ; for I only had leave to tell you on that condition, and therefore, pray don't forget."

" Oh dear no !" cried Lady Pontypool, " I would not say a word about that for the world ; I will only tell him that I know that he concealed the paper, and that I know where it is, and can get it, if I choose to give ten thousand pounds for it ; and therefore that it is a great deal better for him to come forward at once, and be an honest man ; and I will promise him that if he does that, nothing shall be said about it, and every body shall be as kind to him as ever."

" He'll not believe that, my lady," replied Adjutant Green ; " you had better offer him something—for these fellows are such scoundrels, they think of nothing but what they can put in their pocket."

" Well, I will offer him something," said Lady Pontypool ; " for, as I told you, I have got two thousand pounds that I could give ; but as for ten, I have it not indeed ; and I'll not say a word that can betray the secret, depend upon it. Good morning, Mr. Green ! I'll go directly."

The housemaid flew up the stairs like a gazelle, and very shortly after, Lady Pontypool, having put on her bonnet and shawl, and made herself look as imposing as possible, walked out, followed by her own peculiar fat footman, and took the way to Hill Street, Berkeley Square.

" Pray, is Mr. Williamson at home ?" demanded Lady Pontypool of the servant who opened the door.

" Yes, ma'am, he is at home," replied the man, " but he told me he could see no one, when those two gentlemen went away ; for they left him in a terrible way, any how."

" But indeed, if he be at home, I must see him," rejoined Lady Pontypool ; " I have come upon business of importance, which must be done to-day."

" Oh then, I dare say, he will see you," replied the servant ; " for I remember very well, when his youngest daughter died, he would go the to justice-room, and said that business must be done at all times. So, if you'll walk in, ma'am—"

Lady Pontypool was accordingly shown into the dining-room—not where we have already seen the lawyer taking

his solitary dinner, but into that, where, on plate and in splendour, Mr. Williamson, attorney-at-law, had been accustomed, during the last two years, to entertain those young gentlemen who had, or were to have, large fortunes. There she sat herself down, and in a few minutes in walked Mr. Williamson, with the traces of much agitation—much more, indeed, than his mailed countenance had ever exhibited before—still visible in his face.

“ You see me under great distress of mind, Lady Pontypool,” he said abruptly ; “ I told the servant not to let any one in ; but he knew I should be glad to see your Ladyship. I have met with a great loss, Lady Pontypool, a terrible loss.”

“ I know that, sir !” replied my aunt Pontypool, whom fate treated favourably in regard to mistakes, always throwing one in her way, when there was any possibility of so gratifying her—“ I know that, sir ; that is exactly what I came to speak with you about.”

“ Indeed, madam,” said Mr. Williamson, somewhat surprised ; “ very kind of you, I am sure. I did not know you were aware of my poor boy’s death.”

“ Death ! goodness, no !” said Lady Pontypool ; “ I mistook—I thought it was about the robbery of your house, and the loss of the will, you were speaking.”

“ No, madam, no !” said Mr. Williamson sharply : “ I certainly was not speaking of any such thing !—” but then remembering himself immediately, and with his curiosity not a little roused, he added, “ But your Ladyship said you came about the robbery of my house ; may I ask what you can know about it ?”

“ Oh, I did not mean exactly the robbery,” replied Lady Pontypool, who, to use one of the most expressive terms of the Hibernian vernacular, was becoming bothered, “ I meant about the will which you have lost.”

“ What will, madam ?” demanded Mr. Williamson, who loved no assumptions.

“ Oh ! I mean the last will which Lord Adair made—the grandfather of the present man,” replied Lady Pontypool, in the most straightforward manner in the world : “ the will that you and the present man concealed.”

Mr. Williamson gazed at her, extremely puzzled ; for he could not in the least tell whether her reply was dictated by profound art or profound simplicity. “ I see I have been calumniated, madam,” he replied ; “ I know of no will

made by the late Lord Adair, but that which is at Doctors' Commons. But I understand the matter very well, madam ; Captain Lacy and Mr. Henry Adair, after having called here to bully me, have gone on to you."

"Captain Lacy and Henry Adair!" cried Lady Pontypool, with a glow of satisfaction in her countenance, which at once undid Mr. Williamson : "are they in town? Why, Lord Methwyn told me that they had not arrived. Oh, we shall soon get to the bottom of this business now. I am so glad, for it must be concluded to-night."

"What must, madam?" demanded the lawyer.

"Oh, that does not much signify now," replied Lady Pontypool ; "I thought it all rested upon me, and I was willing to do the best I could, to save pain of all kinds. In fact, my coming to you, sir, was to make you an offer which might spare you a great deal hereafter ; but it does not matter now."

"Indeed, my lady," replied Mr. Williamson, who saw that there was information in Lady Pontypool's breast, derived from a different source to that which had furnished hints to Lacy and Henry Adair ; and was consequently very anxious to hear all, or more, than she was likely to tell. "Indeed, my lady, but it does matter ; you have made me no proposal—I am always happy to receive any proposal."

"The proposal I had to make you, sir," replied Lady Pontypool, "was simply this, that, if you would act like an honest man—which I dare say you are inclined to do—and come forward, and tell me all about the will, every thing that is past shall be forgotten, and nothing said about it ; and I will give you two thousand pounds out of my own pocket, though I dare say my cousin Adair will pay me again."

This was a proposal which Mr. Williamson certainly did not at all expect ; and for once in her life, my Aunt Pontypool's calculations were so far in the right, that her offer staggered Mr. Williamson, and by throwing in certain immunity, the removal of apprehension, and two thousand pounds, into the right scale, gave the balance of his mind a leaning towards honesty, which it had never had before in his life. But habit, hope, and the grasping, greedy spirit natural to his heart, prevailed : he ran over in his mind the shame of confession, the improbability of any party being able to shield his name from obloquy, the certain loss of

Lord Adair's agency and its enormous profits, the chances of being thoroughly exposed, disgraced, and obliged to fly ; and adding to these considerations, the seducing hopes of obtaining the paper himself, he mentally rubbed his hands, and made up his mind to his course.

Lady Pontypool saw him pause, and thinking to confirm him in right, she said, " Well, Mr. Williamson, you had better decide. The matter must be settled this very night ; and by giving a very little sum more than what I offer you, I can get the original paper, for it has been offered to me this very day. Then Colonel Adair will have his own, and our sweet Helen will bring Charles the splendid fortune she should always have had."

When the dairy-maid puts the rennet into the boiling milk, suddenly the whole consistence thereof is seen to be changed and metamorphosed ; the sour juice runs curdling through every part, and a stiff, hard cake floats upon a thin and yellowish liquid. Thus did the few words of Lady Pontypool curdle every drop of any thing like human feelings in the heart of the lawyer. The image which she presented to him of the happiness of Colonel Adair,—of him whom he hated with the peculiar hatred of the man who hath done the wrong,—of him whom he hated on account of chastisement merited and received ;—and still more, the image of Helen Adair, who had scorned and rejected his dead son, going a wealthy and an honoured bride to the arms of a noble and affectionate husband, petrified his heart in an instant, and left there engraven his evil resolutions in characters not to be effaced. With a deep but smothered imprecation, he called down vengeance on his own head, if he used not every means to prevent the kind anticipations of her with whom he spoke ; and he determined, as it appeared that no time was to be lost, to spend one half of his ill-gotten wealth rather than fail now.

" I have been considering, Lady Pontypool," he replied, as soon as his fit of meditation was over. " how it can have happened that you, and two or three other respectable people, have been so completely imposed upon. As I said before, I know of no such will as that you speak of ; and in answer to your proposal, which is in fact an insult, I shall give you two pieces of advice,—one applicable to the particular business in regard to which designing people are about to cheat you, and the other of a more general nature. The

first is, always take care what you are about, and never give away two, or even one, thousand pounds for a paper, the authenticity of which you are not sure of. . . .”

“ Ay, but Adjutant Green knows his own hand writing !” interrupted Lady Pontypool.

Mr. Williamson paused suddenly at that name ; but the next moment he went on again : “ I dare say he does, madam,—but I know that no such will exists ; and therefore my second piece of advice to your ladyship is, never to meddle with business that does not concern you, for depend upon it you will get thanks from no one.”

Lady Pontypool rose with an air of offended dignity, and without another word walked out of the house.

“ Run to Bow Street as fast as you can,” said Mr. Williamson, calling to his servant as soon as he had shut the door, “ and beg them to send me down either Ruthven or Smithers, or old Townsend, or some one, directly.”

The man obeyed with alacrity ; but scarcely was he gone, when a single tap at the door echoed through the passage. It was a messenger from the bailiff, to announce that Colonel Adair had been arrested. “ That will do ! that will do !” said Mr. Williamson, rubbing his hands ;—“ now, if I can get two or three more detainers against him on Monday—it is capital that it is on a Saturday night, for he cannot even get bail on Sunday. Capital ! I shall do for them yet !”—and Mr. Williamson applied himself to a bottle of port wine.

The officer who followed the messenger of Mr. Williamson to Hill Street, was one who, with a flaxen whig, nankeen breeches, clean white stockings, and gaiters, and upon his head, slanting at an angle of forty-five, a broad-brimmed, low-crowned hat, might be seen in those days strutting up many a street in London. Old Townsend, indeed, was then somewhat past his prime, and only did a little business occasionally from old affection for the trade ; but he now very willingly came down to speak with Mr. Williamson, as the matter he knew to be one more requiring wit and experience than activity or strength.

“ Sit down, and take a glass of wine, Townsend,” said Mr. Williamson, as soon as he came in ; “ I have sent for you to see if we cannot get hold of this third fellow, who has hitherto escaped us.”

“ Why, Lord, Mr. Williamson !” replied Townsend, in

his peculiar fat voice ; "you are an old hand, and know these matters as well as I do. You know that every man must have his time, unless he be very outrageous. I've nothing to do with this affair, you know ; but the gentlemen who have must let him weigh his weight, I fancy. He's a young hand, it seems, and this is his first job. You've got the old 'uns, so what signifies ?"

" Why it signifies a great deal to me, Townsend," replied Williamson ; " for he has got something of mine that I want to get back."

" Well, that'll be easily managed without troubling the gentleman," answered the officer ; " I dare say I can get it back for you for a trifle, if you'll tell me exactly what it is."

Williamson thought for a minute ;—" No," he said " that will not do, Townsend. Tell me how much, in pounds sterling, ought a man to weigh before his time's up ?"

The officer gave a half laugh ;—" Why about four hundred," he replied.

" Well then, Townsend," said the lawyer, " I'll give the four hundred down for the fellow, over and above the reward offered, if he can be caught this very night : and if you can get the paper into my hand to-night, I will give you two hundred for your own pains."

" That's liberal enough," said Townsend :—" that's liberal enough ! Pray what may the paper be, sir ?"

" That is nothing to any body," replied Mr. Williamson ;—" it is nothing but a paper between me and one of my clients, that he would not have seen for the world. He has been a little wild and foolish or so ;—you know a lawyer has many of these things to do."

" O yes, sir, O yes !" replied the officer with a grin. " However, the only way to manage the matter is for you to go with us. I'll be beside you. We'll have plenty of people, so that there will be no danger ; and while we are examining all the things, you can take what belongs to yourself, and say nothing about it. But the time is short. I do not think our people know who it is—I don't think they have ever inquired much ;—then they will have to find out where he is—the time is very short, Mr. Williamson."

" Do you know a man called Adjutant Green ?" demanded Williamson.

Townsend started. " To be sure," he said : " I saw

him at the Horse Guards this morning ;—but bless you, sir, he has nothing to do with it ! he's not upon the lay. If you had said his brother, Bill Green the boxer, indeed, then I might have said something to you, for he was hard up, we know, some time ago, and has got amongst bad hands."

" Well, but suppose I do say, him ?" said Williamson. " You are on the right scent, Townsend ; follow it out ! But remember it must be to-night."

" O if it be Billy Green," replied the officer, " we'll soon have him. However, you stay at home here, sir ! Do not stir till you see me again. I will go out and get things together ; and when all is ready I will come for you."

While this laudable arrangement was going on, Lady Pontypool had returned home, and found Lady Mary and Major Kennedy, with Louisa Green, Helen Adair's maid, before them, recapitulating the tale of Colonel Adair's arrest upon a fictitious claim ; and Lady Pontypool instantly began to suppose and imagine all manner of things. But Lady Mary put her two hands upon the worthy lady's arms, exclaiming, " No, no, my dear Aunt Pontypool, I will manage this matter myself ! Who can we send, Kennedy ?"

Ere he could reply, however, Lady Pontypool chimed in. " My dear Mary," she said, " you do not know that Charles Lacy is in town, and I understood that he was coming here. When he comes he will go himself, depend upon it."

Lady Mary, and her wounded husband, thought the suggestion not a bad one, and, consequently, Louisa Green was kept to tell her whole tale to Lacy when he did come ; but hour after hour went by without his making his appearance, and—though Lady Pontypool *dare-sayed* this and that and the other detained him, just as if she had really wished to procrastinate Colonel Adair's liberation, which Heaven knows, good woman, she did not in the slightest degree intend to do—Lady Mary at length sent a messenger to Lord Methwyn's to beg that her cousin would come over to her directly. The servant returned with the news that Captain Lacy had just gone out ; and in five minutes after, a sharp, impatient knock at the door made the whole party believe that he had come thither of his own free will. A moment undeceived them, for it was speedily announced that Mr. Henry Adair waited in the library. He would not

come up, the servant said, but wished to know if Lady Pontypool could give him the address of Adjutant Green.

Lady Pontypool declared that she would go down and speak with him, and Lady Mary, however she might commiserate him, could not prevent her aunt from doing as she liked. The good lady's conference with Henry Adair was a great deal more lengthy than either Lady Mary or Major Kennedy liked, but at length it concluded, and as she parted with her young visitor she was heard to say, "Well, I would go directly if I were you, for it is getting late; and as I told you before, you may hear of something to-night which to-morrow may be lost irremediably. I must not say what, for I promised not."

"I shall certainly go to-night, my dear lady," replied Henry Adair, "for I hope to be in Flanders before to-morrow night. What you tell me of my father but induces me to hasten thither the more eagerly. Good-night, and many thanks.

"Did you tell him where to find the Colonel?" demanded Major Kennedy, as soon as Lady Pontypool made her appearance in the drawing-room.

"Oh dear, no! I quite forgot to tell him any thing about the Colonel's being arrested," replied Lady Pontypool. "The truth is, I had matters of so much greater importance to speak to him about, that I forgot every thing else."

Lady Mary saw that my Aunt Pontypool had got hold of a mystery, and she gave up the whole world for lost, as there was no telling, under such circumstances, where the blow might fall.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE first general impression of misfortune is a very different thing from its after effect, when it is analyzed, separated into all its parts, or considered in all its different features. Lacy dismissed the coach that waited, being sure that he could go on foot faster than it could carry him, and as he walked rapidly along towards Holborn, he certainly took all sorts of pains to regard the pertinacious delicacy of Colonel Adair, and the consequences thereof, in every possible light; and he found that however painful had been the first sight

of all the obstacles which the old soldier's determination cast in his way, after-consideration, only rendered each and all of them more terrible and apparently more difficult to be overcome. What was the chance, he asked himself, that the paper itself would ever be recovered? Scarcely any chance existed; and then if Colonel Adair persisted in his resolutions, which Lacy too clearly saw he would, nothing was left but to linger on, perhaps deprived even of the pleasure of Helen's society, till some change, by death or accident, produced an entire alteration in the situation of all parties.

It was a melancholy prospect, and with it, for his consolation, in a night which had become cloudy, and was now beginning to drop, he walked on till he reached the usual resort of hackney coaches, called a stand. There, however, even had he determined to take one, which he had not, no coach appeared, for the commencement of the shower had cleared the street of the few which had lingered there in opposition to the seductions of various places of public amusement. Lacy lost no time, however; but walked on, and at the house of Mr. Owen Snipes procured no further information than that the worthy gentleman had been sent for just as he was sitting down to tea, by a lady of rank, whose name the maid had forgotten. Lacy tried Lady Mary Denham, or Lady Mary Kennedy, but neither of the two fitted the gap in the girl's memory, and he was obliged to desist, leaving a message for Mr. Snipes, importuning that that gentleman would lay Captain Lacy under infinite obligations if he would attend to the note which had been sent to him, without any regard to the lateness of the hour at which he received it.

"Will you not have an umbrella, sir?" demanded the maid, who knew Lacy by sight, and thought she might venture to trust him.

"Why, perhaps it might be as well," replied Lacy, "but your master may want his when he comes home."

"His! Lord bless you, sir!" said the maid, "there are as many as twenty in the little closet in master's room. It looks like an umbrella shop; it's one of his ways, sir."

"Oh, then, bring me one," said Lacy, and, thus defended from the weather, he proceeded on his road towards No. 16. — street, Bloomsbury. Although his recollection of the fact was not positive, yet he felt nearly sure that the

house was that in which Adjutant Green had placed his sister when she recovered from the illness in which he had first found her; and on approaching it this supposition was greatly confirmed by its appearance. It was a neat, small dwelling, with a little shop, now closed, and bore an aspect of tidiness and propriety, which was just what the good soldier would choose for his sister. Lacy knocked smartly at the door, with all the impatience of a bad night: but manifold were the runnings hither and thither which he heard before the door vouchsafed to move upon its hinges. At length, however, it was slowly and cautiously opened by the boy "Bill," who had first guided him from the opera-house, and who now looked at him with prudent and considering eyes by the light of a tallow candle, which afforded no very good view of the visitor's person. "Well, William! Do you not remember me?" asked Lacy; "I am Captain Lacy."

"Oh dear, yes, sir!" answered the boy with an air of embarrassment which Lacy could not understand, for the youth was fat and clean, and well-looking, and well clothed, and bore about him none of the signs and symptoms which people exhibit in *embarrassing situations*. "Oh dear, yes, sir, I remember you very well! My mother will be glad to see you, I dare say."

"Dare say!" said Lacy, thinking that he might meet with a spice of the world's usual return for kindness, in this house also. "Dare say; but never mind, my good boy, it was not her I came to see. I want to speak with your uncle about a note he wrote to Colonel Adair, who cannot come, and has sent me about the business."

"Oh!" cried the boy, seeming more embarrassed than ever; "oh dear! Is that it!—I will call my mother. If you will walk into the back shop, sir, I will call my mother."

Lacy accordingly did walk into the back shop, which was lightless and rather comfortless, feeling as damp and cold as an English August day can sometimes make places feel, and there leaving him with the candle he had carried to the door, the boy scrambled up first the first, and next the second, and last the third flight of stairs, after which Lacy lost the sound of his footsteps, and heard nothing more, till a lighter step began to descend, and he thought—"Here comes the poor woman herself."

His anticipations were not wrong; but ere Mrs. Milsome

reached the back parlour in which Lacy was standing with his dripping umbrella, he heard a voice, which he instantly recognized as that of Adjutant Green, calling after, " You may ask him to come up, Mary ; I will answer for the Captain's honour : I know him to be a gentleman, and he will behave as such, and act according-ly ; be you sure of that."

There was something in all this business that Lacy did not at all understand, and as he had a fondness for seeing his way clear, he began—after the poor woman's first salutations, which were as humble and as grateful as any heart could have desired, and certainly more so than Lacy either hoped or expected—to ask questions, the tendency of which was to elucidate the sort of scramble and confusion in which he found her house ; but poor Mrs. Milsom, who was in a state of agitation, which surprised Lacy as much as all the rest, replied at once, " Oh, do not ask me, sir ! they must tell you all themselves. I am afraid of making mischief. They have nearly fought to-night, and would, too, if he had not been so near death, and yet he thinks he can sail to-morrow, when he cannot stand up for two minutes without help. Pray go up, sir ! I will light you."

Lacy saw at once that his own eyes must be his farther informants, and consequently, while Mrs. Milsome walked before him with the candle in her hand, holding it very low to give him light, he followed her up the clean, but narrow stairs. On the second floor the boy William was standing, looking in a great fright, but Lacy could hear him whisper as he went past, " They are all quiet now." Mrs. Milsome looked glad, but walked on and opening the door of one of the attics, presented Lacy with a scene which his imagination certainly had not forestalled.

The month was August ; but, as we have said, the night was damp and chilly, yet not so cold as to resemble winter. Nevertheless there was an immense fire in the grate, near which was a low press-bed, with the foot towards the fire-place, and seated on that foot, instead of a chair, with his hands and knees curled up into the very blaze, sat a tall powerful man, wrapped up in an immense frieze great-coat, which might have kept an Italian greyhound, or any other shivering sort of animal, in a full glow during the midst of January. The man wore his hair cropped short and smooth, and his features were coarse and heavy, with a bad expression superadded, which was not diminished in effect by a

strong black beard, of near a week's growth. Still there was, in his countenance, a certain degree of resemblance to that of Adjutant Green, which instantly convinced Lacy that he there beheld his brother, the pugilist, who had been lying ill in the hospital when he first visited the widow Milsome.

"A bad looking scoundrel," thought Lacy; "and yet with the same sort of likeness to his noble-hearted brother, as we may conceive to have existed between Lucifer in his unfallen glory, and the demon cast into the lake of fire."

Lacy's eye had instantly rested upon the person who was a stranger to him; but halfway across the room stood Adjutant Green himself, who advanced as the officer entered, and welcomed him in frank but respectful terms. He did not offer to take Lacy's hand, but Lacy took his and shook it cordially, and then approached the fire, while William Green, who sat before it, eyed him askance as he came near, without attempting to rise. Lacy now saw that the man was evidently extremely ill; and it might be gathered from the expression of his countenance, which was fierce and dogged in the extreme, that he was one who did not bow before the chastening rod.

"Well, well," he cried in a rude tone, gazing at Lacy from under his heavy brows; "why did not the old man come himself? but I don't care a d—n whether he comes or sends, provided he comes down. What will he give, eh?"

"I really do not understand what you mean, sir," replied Lacy, in a cold and haughty tone. "I came hither on the part of Colonel Adair, to speak with Adjutant Charles Green."

"Ay, a pretty Adjutant they made when they made him," muttered the other; but Lacy went on.

"I came, I say, to speak with Adjutant Green, concerning a note which he sent to Colonel Adair, desiring to see him here."

"Note! he sent no note!" replied the ruffian. "I sent the note. D—n him, the business is none of his, though he must needs meddle with it. But, I say, why did not the old fool come himself instead of sending a young un in his place?"

"Oh, William, William!" cried Mrs. Milsome, who had

followed into the room ; " how can you speak so to Captain Lacy, who saved me and my children from starving ? "

" Saved you from starving ! " replied the other, looking from her to Lacy, with sullen fury gleaming in his feverish eyes. " Ay, d—n him, and ordered my bull-dogs to be sold, I'll bet you a gallon, to make broth for you and your brats."

" No, sir ! no ! " cried Adjutant Green, striding forward ; " it was I ordered them to be sold ; and if I had ordered them to be tied together by the neck, and chucked into the Thames, as I at first intended, I should have served you right."

A furious reply was just breaking forth, but Lacy interposed. " Come, come," he said in an authoritative tone ; " let me hear no more of this, if you are men of sense. I came here to speak upon some business, and if I hear any more such idle and improper nonsense I shall go at once."

" Well, go ! " cried the pugilist, in a sullen tone, somewhat cowed by the tone of command which Lacy's military habits enabled him to assume. " Go ! d—mme ; I don't want you—it was not you I sent for. Go along with you ! "

" Very well ! " replied Lacy, turning on his heel, as if to quit the room, " I will go ! " " Ay ! and peach too, I dare say," replied the other, in a more moderate tone ; " but, harkee, young un, if old Colonel Adair sent you, and you care any thing about him, your going away may be the loss of more nor twenty thousand a year to him, that's all."

" Colonel Adair sent me, sir," said Lacy, turning, and speaking in a grave but composed manner, " to speak upon some business with a person he believed could behave like a gentleman, and would treat me as such, and if I do not find that I have such a person to deal with, I will not undertake the task, though Colonel Adair cannot come himself."

" Well, well, I don't want to treat you unlike a gentleman," replied the other ; " come, sit down by the fire, for it is cursed cold, and tell me what the Colonel will give."

" Give ! " said Lacy, " I do not understand what you mean. Give, for what ? There is all that Colonel ~~Adair~~ has heard of the business—it is, I suppose, your own note."

" Ay, but did not the old woman tell him ? " cried the other, turning towards his brother. " There ! you see how

you have mismanaged all this business. Why there will be twenty people know the whole story before to-morrow morning. You'll get me hanged. I'll be d——d if you dont, with your foolery. Though the beaks know very well that I do not weigh my weight yet, and would let me off if they could, yet if the story is told all over the town, they'll be obliged to look sharp after me, and I shall not get off to America after all. Why, Charles," he added, with a stamp of the foot, and a vehement execration, "you'll be the means of hanging your own brother. If you'd let me manage my own way, and bring my own goods to market, I'd get off clear, and make a pretty fortune of it, to settle across the water with ; but if they once get wind of my being about to bolt, they'll hang me to-morrow, though I have not had half my time."

" Your own goods !" retorted Adjutant Green. " Do you call that your own goods that you stole from another ? I'll tell you what, William, sooner than you should carry that paper out of England with you, I'd cut you down myself, as soon as look at you, and if ever you got up again, your head would be harder than a Frenchman's helmet."

The other set his teeth hard, and shook his fist at him, saying, in a low deep voice, " You know I am hurt, or you dare not say that. But I'll teach you better some day."

" This is all stuff, however," said Adjutant Green, " and you are keeping Captain Lacy for nothing. I'll tell him the whole story ; and I'll answer for him not to tell again."

" Did you not promise me not to tell any one ?" cried the other, " you pitiful varment ?"

" I did promise you," replied Adjutant Green, " and I have told nobody but Lady Pontypool, and you gave me leave to tell her. I'll not tell Captain Lacy if you dont like it—but only say so at once. All I say is, I will answer for him, that he will do nothing that can hurt you."

" On my honour, as a gentleman and a soldier," said Lacy, " I will use no information, which you may think it right to give me, to your detriment in any way."

" I don't like it being blabb'd to so many," replied the other, somewhat soothed apparently by Lacy's promise. " It is not that I doubt you, sir ; but now here is my brother Charles—a fool I was for letting him wind the matter at all—and then there is Lady Pontypool, to whom he got

leave to tell it, when he could not find the Colonel, and then there will be yourself, and then the old gentleman must know—so that before I can get clear off, there will be six or seven in the secret."

"With me, on my honour, it shall be as if it had not been told," said Lacy, who had now learned enough to make him anxious to know more. "There may be difficulties which your brother could not arrange, and which I can. I more than suspect the whole truth; but if you tell it me fairly and straightforwardly, it may prove greatly to your advantage."

"Well, you shall be told," answered the other—"you shall be told, though my wind is devilish short; so he had better tell it to you," and he pointed to his brother. "Come, Mr. Adjutant, see if you can use your tongue to some better use than you've done yet."

"The truth is, sir," said Adjutant Green, in a grave and indignant tone, "that when I arrived in town, yesterday, I found my sister Mary here, in a terrible state, with fear and sorrow, sir, and I asked her what was the matter. It was a long time before she would tell, but at last she confessed that this unfortunate man, sir —"

"D——d unfortunate, indeed," muttered the other, "for I've got a shot in my back-bone, that would have been better in your's."

This was said, however, in such a tone as not to interrupt his brother, who went on, "that this unfortunate man, who had never been near her since he got well, because his cursed bull-dogs had been sold, came to hide himself in her house, five or six nights ago, all bleeding and hurt—"

"Ay, a fool she was, to tell *you* all that," burst forth the other, "you, a——boiled lobster, that I would fight, any day, for a cool hundred, and get myself backed for double the money, if I were well enough. Come, come, cut short your gammon. What the devil has he to do with all that? Tell him about the paper, and nothing more."

"What he says is true, sir," rejoined Adjutant Green, "we have nothing to do with how he got the paper—certain it is, he has no right to it. However, I found here he was, badly wounded, and afraid of his life, so I went up and saw him, and he told me that he was going off to America, as to-morrow morning—though Lord bless you, Captain

Lacy, he'll never stir out of this room—I've seen many a man wounded — ”

“ Do you mean to say I'll die here, you—— ” interrupted the other. “ But never mind ! Get on, I'll show you another story to-morrow.”

“ Well, sir, he talked of going to America, and told me that he had got hold of a paper that would make his fortune, when he got there—for he knew all about the good old Colonel's having lost the India fortune, on account of the will, better than I did, for he had been in England, and often down in that part of the country, and I had always been on foreign service—but, however, I made him tell me what it was, and he showed me the very will which I signed myself, as a witness. But I forgot,” he added, remembering that he and Lacy had never spoken upon the subject before, and apprehending that he should have to enter into another long history, when, to say the truth, he felt his incompetence to tell any history at all very clearly—“ but I forgot, you do not know all about the will.”

“ Yes !” said Lacy, “ yes, I do. I know all about it—I know that you witnessed it, and that it was concealed and kept by that villain Williamson. I could even tell your brother the very box and drawer from which he took it, in the little back parlour, when he broke into the house.”

“ The devil you could !” cried the wounded man, half starting up ; “ then there is no use of hiding any thing from him —so tell him all.”

“ Well, sir, when I found that,” said Green, “ I told him he should do no such thing as carry them out of England with him, and we had a long dispute, sir, for he wanted to make a fortune by it, sir ; and I wanted him to give it up to those who had a right to it. But he said no ; if the Colonel wanted the will he should pay for it, and that if he gave the old gentleman back twenty thousand a year or so, he could well afford to give him ten thousand pounds down.”

“ To be sure,” interrupted the other, “ and so I say still, and I'll tell you what, Captain Lacy, I'd sooner take the will and put in that ere fire than give it you for a farthing less—I'd do it as soon as look at you.”

“ There is no use of working yourself up into a passion before any one contradicts you, my good fellow,” replied Lacy. “ Let me hear your brother's story out, and then I will speak more about the will.”

" Well," continued Adjutant Green, " I found there was no use arguing with him, for he would have his own way about the money; but I swore, sir—with an oath, which is not a thing I am accustomed to do, for I do not think it behaving like a gentleman."

" You be d—d," growled his brother, with a look of contempt

" But on this occasion I swore with an oath that he should not take the will out of England with him. That, I thought, I had a right to do, for you see the ship might be lost—he might die on the passage, as he certainly would do, if ever he got on board the transport—for do you see, sir, he'll not live three days longer. He's got a gunshot wound in the small of his back, with a place as black as your hat coming all round it. Well, I tried to persuade him to do what was right before he died; but, no, he would sell the will he had stolen—"

" Stolen!" again interrupted the other. " You lie, I did not steal it. I took it! I picked nobody's pocket of the will! I slipped it off nobody's counter. I took it boldly, and like a man. More than you'd do, I'll answer for you."

" Certainly it is," replied Green, " but there is no use going on at this rate, we shall never have done. When I found he would do nothing like an honest man, I persuaded him to let me go and see if I could find Colonel Adair, to bring him here, and let him make his bargain now, for I told him he should never carry the will away. And I hunted the old gentleman all last night, for I knew that if he were not over he was coming very soon; but I could not find him any where; and then, as I knew that Lady Pontypool had a great deal of kindness for the Colonel, and was a relation, and would do any thing to show a kindness to any body, I thought she might give the money very likely, and this morning, about ten o'clock, I proposed it to him, and after a great deal of work he consented, and I went up to Lady Mary Denham—Kenney's house. I beg her pardon—for I knew she had come over, because we came in the same packet, and I was of little assistance, and that. But Lady Pontypool had gone out, to your house, sir. So then away I went there, because I wanted to see you and young Mr. Henry too; but she had left, and I met your father coming out. So my Lord talked to me a long time, and then I went back to Lady Pontypool's, where I found her

and told her the whole story. And she said that she would give the ten thousand in a minute, if she had it to give, but she had not ; and if I would let her tell Lady Mary and Major Kennedy, she could get it for asking. However, I had promised to tell nobody but her, and to make her tell nobody else, and so I dared not till I had asked him. When I came back, however, I found all matters changed, for our little Louisa had been to see her mother, poor Mary there, in the mean time, and had told where Colonel Adair lived, and William there had sent off a note to him, with his own hand ; so I told him that I dared to say Lady Pontypool would see him before he came to us, and might think she had a right to tell him, so that he would come ready to settle the business at once. However, nobody did come all the evening, and he was talking of getting into a hackney to-morrow at four, and going off for the ship, and taking the will with him, and that was what we were quarrelling about when you came in sir."

" Ay ! and now he has brought his cursed long-winded gammon to an end," added the brother, " I'll tell you what in a word, Captain Lacy—I'll have twelve thousand for will, or the old cock shall never see a line of it. If you come upon his part, you can settle the matter at once. I know you are rich enough, and can have what money you want ; and so I'll have no humbugging, and coming and going to ask people's authority. You shall give me a draft for the twelve thousand before you go out of this house, or curse me if I do not jam the will into that fire."

" Why, your brother said that you demanded ten thousand pounds," said Lacy, in a calm tone, seeing that the man raising his price upon him, and fearful if he showed any great eagerness the unprincipled ruffian might go still farther in his demands.

" Ay, never mind what he said," replied William Green, " I say twelve ! I've changed my mind, and if you shilly shally much longer, I'll change it again."

" Perhaps you may," said Lacy, with a smile, " especially when you hear what I have to tell your brother. What do you think, Adjutant, Henry Adair, your young friend, hearing from my father, who it seems had his information from you, that old Lord Adair is very ill, is going back to Brussels directly, and he commissioned me to give his word of honour to the Colonel, that as soon as ever the property

was in his power, he would restore to him the whole India fortune, principal and interest, knowing very well that it was his by right."

The face of William Green turned for a moment perfectly livid with disappointment and surprise ; but the next moment starting up off the end of the bed, he exclaimed with a fearful oath, " You're cheating me ! you're lying ! you know you are !"

" Sir ! " cried Lacy fiercely, but remembering that he was speaking to a blackguard, he added, in a calmer tone ; " I give you my honour that what I have said is true, and as I understand that there is very little chance of the old Lord Adair recovering, Colonel Adair will soon have no need of that will whatever, in order to regain his rightful property. However, for my own gratification, in points altogether personal, I shall be contented to give a certain sum for the paper you hold in your hand, provided your demand is moderate ; but you had better take till to-morrow to consider of it, for I am in no hurry, the matter being, as I told you, totally personal ; and you may depend upon my not betraying you."

" No, no ! d—n it, that will not do ! " cried the man, sinking back on the bed. " No, I'll take no less than the ten thousand, any how. If you like to give that well and good, if not—there it goes," and he pointed towards the fire.

At that moment, however, there was a slight noise heard below, and the boy, Bill, ran in to say that there was a knock at the street-door. William Green glared round with the terrors of guilt upon him ; but Lacy relieved him by saying, " I dare say it is Colonel Adair himself. He could not come when I left him, because he was detained by a matter which could not be otherwise managed ; but I begged him to come himself as soon as he could."

" Well, open the doer, Bill, open the door ! " said his uncle. " If it is an elderly gentleman of the name of Adair, let him come up ; but mind what you are about now."

" Oh, I'll mind," said the boy, and away he went, closing the door behind him.

A few minutes then elapsed in silence, but then there was a sound below, as if some heavy thing had fallen, and then the noise of feet running up stairs. The steps were not those of one person—no, nor of two. They were light, it is true, and seemed taken cautiously, to avoid noise, but still they were many, that was evident ; and the face of the

housebreaker changed paler and paler. There suddenly came over it a dark red flush, while his brow knit, and his white teeth were seen clenched between his quivering lips. "I am betrayed," he said, turning towards Lacy, and stamping with his foot, "I am betrayed ! but d—n me if ever any one shall be the better for it ! 'There !'" and he cast the will at once into the blazing fire.

Lacy and Adjutant Green both started forward to snatch it from the flames ; but animated by passion and despair, he cast himself in their way, exclaiming, "No, no ! I say, stand off, or by _____ I'll shoot you !"

He had snatched a brace of large holster pistols from the bed where they had been lying beside him ; but neither Green nor Lacy would have recoiled from them, had not the paper, which was old and dry, caught fire in a moment, and blazed up into a flame, that left no chance of saving it. There was a momentary struggle between the two brothers, during which Lacy could not pass, but that struggle was enough, and before the young officer could force his way across, the paper had curled up into a black and meaningless cinder. Adjutant Green saw its fate too, and unclasping his brother from the grasp with which he had endeavoured to put him aside, he turned to look towards the door, which was now opening.

"Oh God ! oh God ! they have come to take him indeed !" cried Mrs. Milsome, running into one corner of the room, while Lacy and the gallant soldier drew a step back, leaving the ruffian standing alone before the fire, his dark face swelled with the excitement of passion, and his eyes rolling over the group of several faces that presented itself in the door-way.

"Ay, d—n ye, old Williamson !" he cried, as his eye lighted upon the lawyer, who was the first that presented himself, hurrying on in hopes of possessing himself of the paper. "There is for you !" and levelling a pistol towards the door, he fired. The lawyer bounded up a foot from the ground, and fell back amongst the others, who, in general, recoiled at the pistol shot ; but one young man ran on. The ruffian levelled his second pistol, but Lacy sprang upon him, and strove to grasp his arm. He did, indeed, shake his aim, but ere the young officer could wrench the pistol from his hand, it too was fired, and Henry Adair fell back upon the floor. He sprang up again in a moment, however, and

rushed upon the house-breaker, who was struggling with Lacy, but was nearly overpowered, for though naturally a much stronger man than the young officer, his momentary strength, which was derived alone from despair and rage, was yielding every moment under the debility which had followed his former wounds. He was now in an instant mastered, and some of the Bow Street officers running up—while others raised up the lawyer—secured their prize.

“Adair, you are hurt,” said Lacy: “I hope not seriously.”

“Nothing, nothing!” replied Henry Adair; “but what is all this business about, for I do not well know. Have you got the paper?”

“No!” replied Lacy, with a tone of bitter disappointment. “No; there it lies! The villain has burned it!”

“Well, it matters not,” answered Henry Adair; “I will act as if it existed; but if I saw right, that villain Williamson has met his reward. I went to Lady Pontypool, and then waited an hour for you, as you promised to rejoin me; but finding that you did not appear, I came on here, according to Lady Pontypool’s directions. When I knocked at the door to inquire for Charles Green, Williamson and two other men came up, and when he saw me he wanted to persuade me not to go in, for that they were going to take up a desperate housebreaker; but I suspected his object, and would go too, when all the other officers came up, and the door was opened. He hurried on first however, and up that dark and narrow staircase I could hardly keep pace with him; but he has met his reward. But, now, who is this desperate man they have just taken?”

“He is my unfortunate brother, Mr. Henry,” replied Charles Green, coming forward, “that was the reason that I did not help the Captain when he sprang upon him. My heart turned cold at the thought of having a hand in the taking of my mother’s child.”

The culprit, in the mean time, had remained sitting in sullen silence on the bed, but his brother’s voice seemed to rouse him, and glaring upon him, he exclaimed, “You have hanged me, you see! If it had not been for you I should have been safe. They would never have known that I was here; and if they had, they would never have taken me, because my time was not up, if you had not been

coming and going about that infernal will. You have hanged your own brother ! Ay ! let that stick to you !”

Malice is often fearfully cunning in the secrets of the heart it would wring, and the ruffian could have inflicted no bitterer pang upon the gallant soldier, than by making him believe he had contributed to bring his own brother to an ignominious death. That such was not the effect however, is pleasant to state, and it may be as well to follow the history of William Green to its close at once. He was taken to a place of security, where of course but little accommodation would be found for one so severely wounded as he had been. They were obliged to carry him out of the hackney-coach in which he had been conveyed ; and as all the excitement he had undergone died away, he became more and more weak in proportion to the efforts he had made use of during the preceding day. His sister presented herself early the next morning for admittance, and found him in such a state that she besought them to send for a surgeon, not in the hope of prolonging his life, to see it end in a few weeks on a scaffold, but for the purpose of soothing his last moments. The surgeon pronounced immediately that the wound he had received some days before was now, in consequence of neglect, in a complete state of mortification ; and certified, for the satisfaction of the magistrates, that he could not be brought up for examination. Before the magistrates had assembled, indeed, he was speechless ; and before they separated he was dead.

In the meanwhile, the Bow street officers who remained after he had been sent away, made a strict examination and search of Mrs. Milsome's premises, taking away a great many articles belonging to their prisoner, and a great many which did not belong to him at all. Henry Adair, Adjutant Green, and Charles Lacy, proceeded first to the room below, into which the lawyer had been carried, and where he was now stretched upon a sofa, quite dead, the ball having been sent with unerring aim straight through his head. As they were standing gazing, with several others who came in with the officers, upon the spectacle which the dead body presented, Lacy perceived something slowly dropping on the grey drugget, with which the room was covered, from the coat of Henry Adair. “Good God !” he exclaimed ; “it is blood ! How could you tell me, Adair, that you were not hurt ?”

"I hardly felt it at the time," replied Henry Adair ; "but my shoulder is beginning to burn a good deal, and to feel very stiff. I wish, my man," he added, turning to a lad who stood near, "that you would have the goodness to call a surgeon ; for as I must go off early to-morrow, it may be as well to stop this bleeding."

The surgeon came, and the ball was found to be lodged just below the external joint of the collar-bone. It was extracted immediately, and with no great difficulty ; but the surgeon directed that his young patient should be conveyed to his hotel, and instantly go to bed, there to remain as quiet as possible for several days. The next morning, however, when he called, he found that Henry Adair, confirmed in his resolution of going at once to Brussels by the information he had received from Adjutant Green the night before, had set out at five o'clock in the morning.

It fell to the task of Lacy to communicate to Colonel Adair the events of which we have just given an imperfect sketch ; but he found him reinstated in his lodgings in Piccadilly by the efforts of Mr. Owen Snipes, who had reached Chancery Lane shortly after Charles Lacy had left it. Helen was not in the room to which Lacy was shown ; and it was in vain that the lover attempted to move the old officer upon all those points which we have seen discussed between them on their last meeting.

"I will tell you what, Lacy," he said at length, "my child's happiness, and yours, my dear friend, are objects of the deepest interest to me : but I cannot sacrifice my principles. However, I am about to go into the country for a short time, whenever I have seen the Commander-in-chief : Before that, I wish you would abstain from seeing Helen. She shall write to you, if you like ; but in six months, if you still hold your purpose towards her, and your father will condescend to ask her of me for your wife, come down and join us in Warwickshire, and I will oppose no more."

They were hard conditions, but Lacy was forced to consent ; and in two days after, Colonel Adair and Helen quitted London. Ere a week more passed, the old officer was raised to the rank of General, and that, with the prospect of future honours, Lacy evidently saw affected much the views of his own father.

Not long after, Charles Lacy received a letter from Henry Adair, announcing his father's death, and telling his friend,

who he knew was anxious on his account, that his wound was completely healed. He also conveyed, in the same letter, to Colonel Adair, his distinct proposal to restore all that part of the family property which his father had unjustly possessed. His offer, however, was decidedly declined, without a hope being held out that it would ever be acceded to.

In the meanwhile, Helen and Lacy corresponded regularly, though what their letters contained remains sealed within their own bosoms. At length, however, within a month of the end of that probationary time which her father had appointed, Lacy's letters suddenly ceased, and for a fortnight Helen remained in pain and apprehension. At the end of that time, however, as she sat at the breakfast-table, tremblingly watching the post-bag as it was put into her father's hands, there appeared a letter, certainly in Lacy's hand, bearing the post-mark, "Nice."

"What can this mean?" said her father, first looking at the black seal, and then reading the direction—"To Major-General, the Right Honourable Lord Adair."

"My dear sir," wrote Charles Lacy, "to both my beloved Helen and yourself, the date of this letter (Nice) will afford some surprise; and the tidings which it bears will, I know, to your kind and generous hearts, be as painful as if no accession of worldly rank, and no increase of fortune, were to follow. I have to communicate to you, that my poor friend Henry Adair died at this place in the course of last night. The excessive fatigue which he encountered about six months ago, various colds which he caught, by total neglect of himself, a wound, which, before he attended to it, had drained him dreadfully of blood; but I believe, more than all, great depression of spirits on account of his father's conduct in the matter of the will, and also grief for his death, which he had hastened, as he believed, by a letter upon that business, had thrown him into an ill state of health, which ended in consumption. I had heard from him two or three times since he left England; but he never mentioned that he was ill, till in his last letter he begged me, the moment I received it, to put myself into a carriage and come to him, if I wished to see him alive.

"A note was enclosed by his servant from the physician, who accompanied him to Nice, telling me that my friend having communicated to him the request he had sent to me,

he thought it but fair to say that I need not make the attempt to reach him, as there was scarcely a possibility of his living even till I received his letter. I did make the attempt, however, and travelled night and day, which has been the cause of my not having written to my beloved Helen. Though that apparent neglect was a mortification, yet I had the satisfaction of arriving before my poor friend closed his eyes, and spent with him the last eight hours of his life. He was sensible to the last, perfectly satisfied to die—I should even say glad; and retained all those high and noble feelings which so much distinguished him through life, to the very close of existence. He expressed but one desire to me, which was, that a lock of his hair might be cut off and sent to Helen, with a request that she would wear it in a locket, ‘for the sake of one who had loved her well.’ I use his own words, and hope she will comply, for we must both mourn for one so amiable and noble-minded.

“ His will had been made long before I arrived. It is very brief; and, after appointing me executor, it proceeds to assign a few legacies, and then names you as residuary legatee.

“ Shall I congratulate you, my dear sir? No, I will not! I am now about to lie down to take a few hours’ rest, and by the next post will write to my own Helen. As soon as all the sad business which remains to be performed here is over, I will fly to claim your promise, and her hand, for the time you prescribed is past; and *before I left town*—and there was a long dash under the four last words—“ *before I left town*, my father had promised me to go down himself to ask her for me at your hands.

“ In the mean time, believe me,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Yours ever affectionately,

“ CHARLES LACY.”

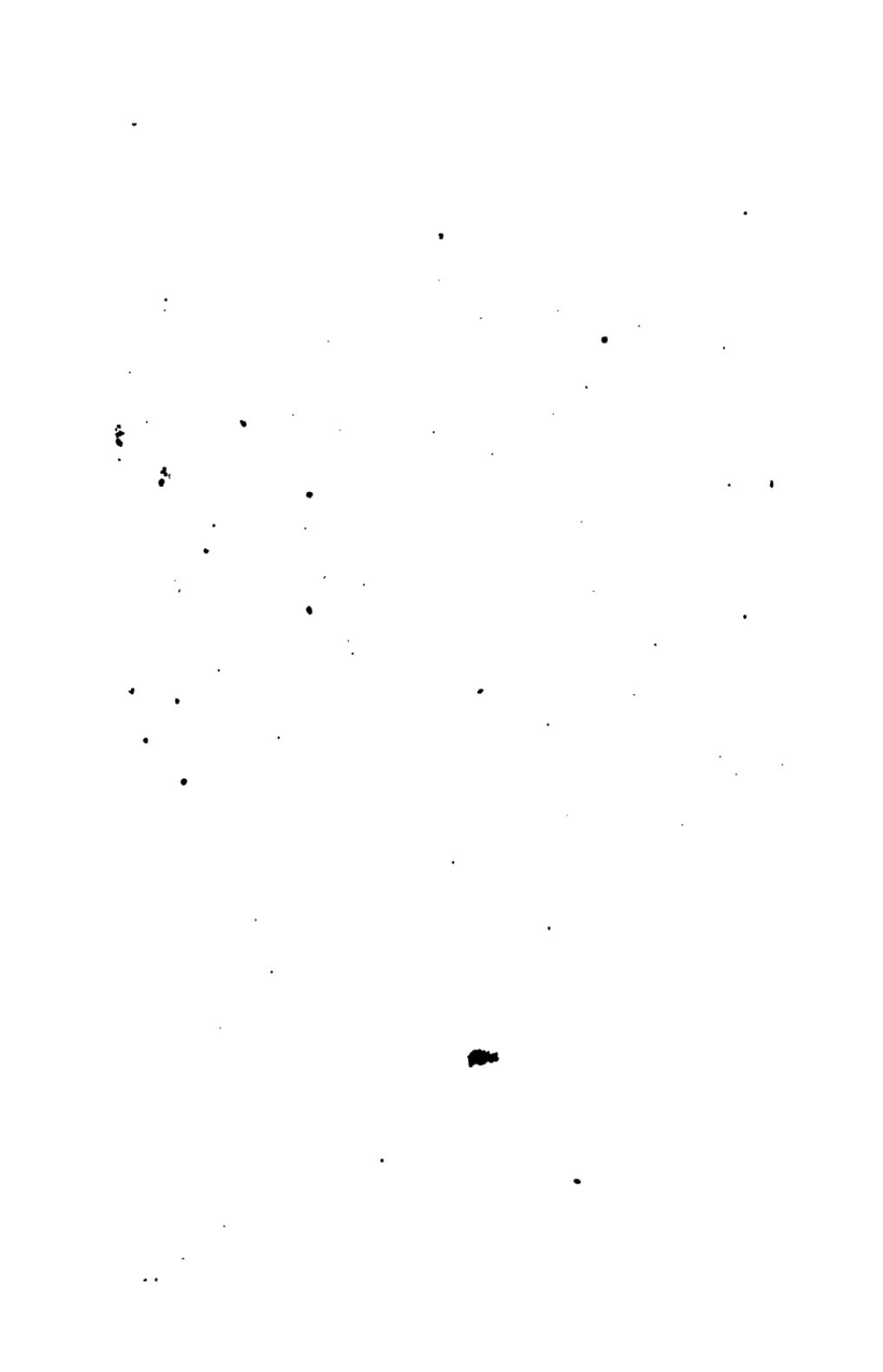
“ Married on the 25th, at St. George’s, Hanover Square, by the Very Reverend the Dean of Chester, Major the Honourable Charles Lacy, only son of Viscount Methwyn, to Helen, only daughter of Major-General Lord Adair.”

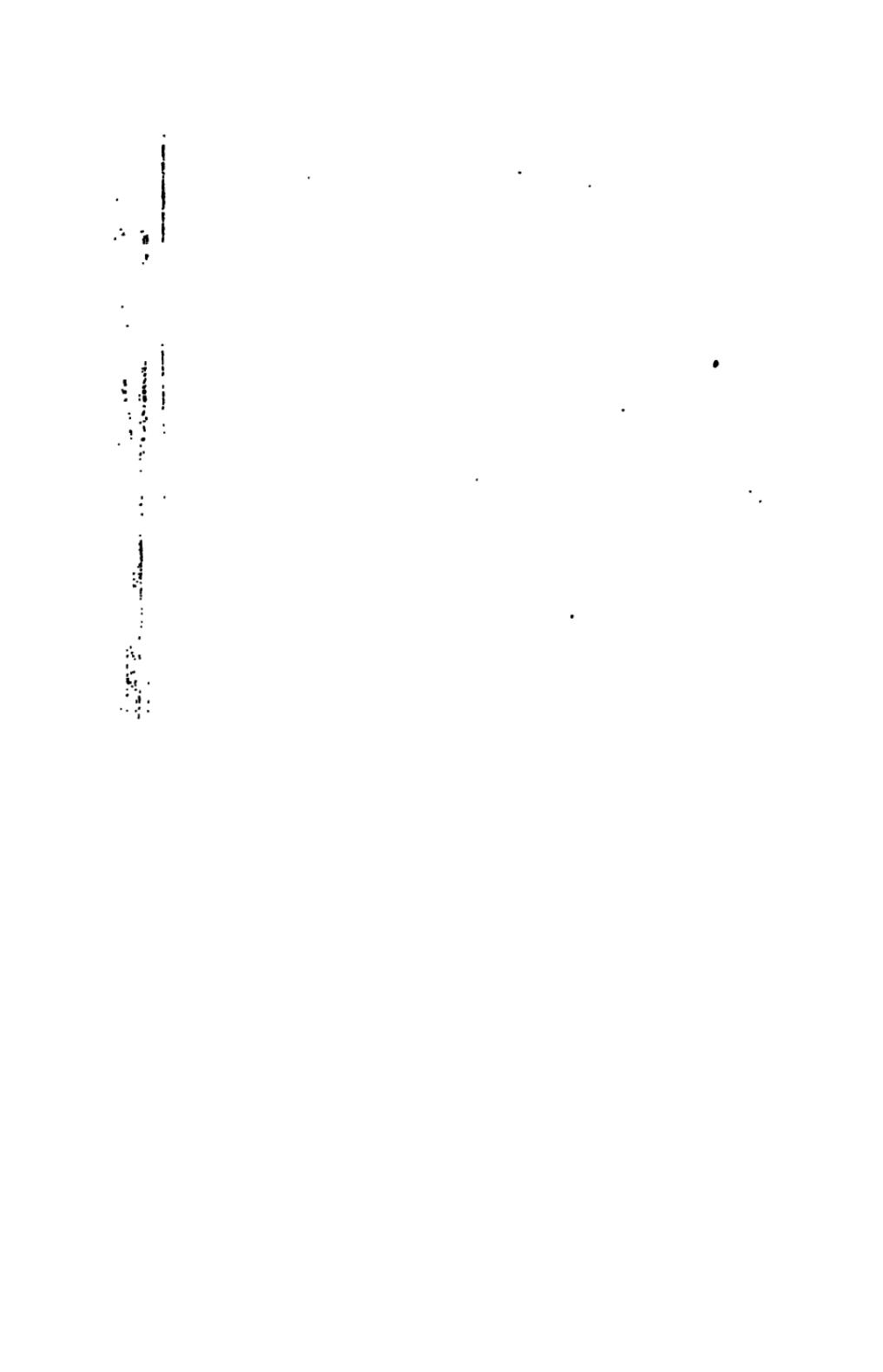
THE END.

W. J. BROWN. LIBRARIAN









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